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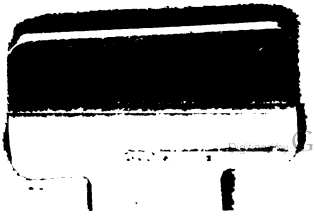
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ALEXIS,

THE TYRANT OF THE EAST.

A PERSIAN TALE.

——— "Ill deeds are seldom slow
Or single,—but following crimes on former wait."

SHAKESPEARE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR HENRY COLBURN,

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1812.

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PREFACE.

The following truly interesting History *was selected from a number of very valuable Manuscripts in the Persian language, found in the Alexandrian Library at the time of the Invasion of Egypt by the French: — It has been considered as a true and lively picture of the barbarous manners and licentious habits of those early ages.—It contains a succinct Account of the extraordinary Adventures of that blood-stained Tyrant of the East, whose valorous exploits and daring crimes were long the constant Theme of the Persian Bards; and whose* fame *is still proverbial in all Quarters of the Eastern World.—The melancholy fate which at last awaited him, and closed a life fraught with the most atrocious acts of villany, resulting from the unrestrained indulgence of criminal Desires and a boundless Ambition, conveys a most salutary lesson and a sure conviction to the reflecting*

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mind, that, notwithstanding profligacy and vice may be permitted, by an all-wise Providence, to endure for a time, and triumph in apparent security, it is designed more as an Example to be shunned than followed, and that a day of retribution is certain to arrive, when the wicked shall sink beneath the frown of an offended Judge, and perish at once unpitied, unlamented, and universally despised.

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THE

FALL

OF

ALEXIS.

WEST of the ruins of Babylon, in the year of Christianity 632, HIRA was the seat of a race of kings who had embraced the Christian religion, and reigned above 600 years under the shadow of the throne of Persia. Upon the borders of the kingdom of Hira a tribe of Arabs had fixed their residence, who had left their countrymen, in the neighbourhood of Medina and Mecca, engaged in the struggle for the foundation of the religion of Mahomet; and, being more bent on plunder and devastation than the thoughts of religious duties, or the contention

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for any different mode of worship than that which they had hitherto acknowledged, they crossed the immense desarts which surround the Arabian frontier, and settled themselves in a more pleasant and desirable part of the world, in a large tract of country abounding with lofty mountains and most delightful plains, covered with herbage, and extending many leagues, from north to south, along the confines of the Kingdom of Hira. After the different convulsions which the Persian monarchy had undergone by the arms of Greece and Rome, many provinces of that once great empire had become distinct kingdoms, under the dominion of the descendants of those governors, to whose care they had been entrusted by the Persian kings, and who now claimed them as their own rightful possessions, but who, nevertheless, still paid a sort of *homage* to the Great King, by sending an ambassador to him every year with some rich present.

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The King of Hira's dominions were of vast extent, stretching from the confines of Arabia, along the banks of the Caspian Sea, even to the borders of Tartary, and comprehending a very considerable portion of the distant limits of the Persian boundaries. Maximin, the reigning Prince, was one of the most warlike monarchs of his time; despising the degenerate effeminacy of the Persians, he had made it his constant care to train his people to the love of arms, and had, by his example and authority, excited a universal thirst for glory and renown among all classes of his subjects. To train them for the accomplishment of greater schemes, which he had formed in his mind, and to inure them to the dangers of war and conquest, he had frequently made long and daring inroads into the country of the Tartars, and penetrated their gloomy forests with a numerous train of warriors; to which

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excursions he gave the denomination of *hunting parties.*

Many sanguinary and obstinate encounters they experienced with some of the numerous tribe of Tartars who hovered round the mountains, and occupied the forests of that region; but the mind of Maximin was fixed on no less an object than the conquest of the whole Persian Empire; and, by exercising his troops in the practice of war, and infusing a military ardour throughout his whole kingdom, he hoped to be able in a short time to employ his hardy soldiers against the already tottering throne of his superior; and, taking advantage of the weakness and effeminacy of the government, by an easy conquest, invest himself with the tiara of the Persian Monarch. Animated with this hope, he devoted his whole time to the training of his army, and encouraging every spirit of valour which he discovered in his officers or soldiers. His subjects were pleased

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with his military ardour, and cheerfully partook of every danger, and entered into the spirit of his martial expeditions, although they were ignorant of the true intentions of their leader. They admired the lofty stature and martial graces of their sovereign: although educated in the silk and purple of the East, Maximin possessed the iron temper of a soldier, which cannot easily be paralleled except in the lives of Richard the First of England and of Charles the Twelfth of Sweden:—such was his strength and exercise in arms, that Raymond, surnamed the Hercules of Antioch, was incapable of wielding the lance and buckler of the King of Hira.

In a famous tournament given in honor of his daughter's nuptials, he signalized himself most astonishingly: he entered the lists on a fiery courser, and overturned in his first career three of the stoutest knights. The first in a charge, the last in a retreat; his friends

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and his enemies alike trembled; the former for *his* safety, and the latter for their own. In one of his excursions on the mountains, when they were in hourly expectation of meeting with a body of Tartars, who were known to be at hand, after posting an ambuscade in a wood, he rode forward, accompanied only by a favorite youth named ALEXIS, who was the orphan son of one of his late distinguished officers. While passing the corner of a rock, eighteen horsemen appeared, but, after a short combat, fled before them; they had not proceeded much farther before another body of the enemy approached; being now far removed from his own troops, Maximin saw no other means of safety, than in endeavoring to regain his party; and, as the enemy had by that time surrounded them, he cheered his young companion by his example, and they actually fought their way through a troop of fifty horse! Maximin was

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unhurt, but *Alexis* was wounded, and was conveyed by easy journeys to one of the Royal Palaces, where the King ordered his own physicians to attend him. In this skirmish, the King had slain several of the Tartars with his own hand; and he returned to his camp, dragging along their chiefs, his prisoners, whom he had tied to the rings of his saddle. He was ever foremost to provoke or accept a single combat; and the gigantic champions who encountered his arm, were transpierced by the lance, or cut asunder by the sword, of the invincible Monarch.—With the valor of a soldier, he united the skill and prudence of a general:—in the field, he slept in the sun or in the snow, tired in the longest marches the strength of his men and horses, and shared with a smile the abstinence or diet of the camp. He had two daughters; one was married to a Prince in the Persian dominions, in whose alliance he hoped to strengthen his de-

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sign upon the Persian diadem; and the other, a Princess of uncommon beauty and accomplishments, resided in the Palace of *Zurbad*, enjoying the delightful gardens and varied pleasures of that beautiful palace; while her father was seeking danger in every shape, and busy in perfecting his soldiers in that acquirement, by the aid of which he trusted he should be able soon to gratify his towering ambition. To this palace was the wounded Alexis conveyed by the command of Maximin, who desired that every attention should be afforded him to procure his recovery.

Alexis, the subject of the present History, was cast in the best proportions of strength and manly beauty; though deficient in the softer graces of those youths who loitered in the effeminate pleasures of the Court of Persia, this defect was supplied by a manly countenance, a lofty stature, athletic muscles, and the air and deportment

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of a soldier. Bred in a camp, and under the particular care and example of Maximin, he imbibed the same manners that conspicuously marked the character of his royal master; he was almost a stranger to luxury, inured to continual deprivations, entertained a thorough contempt for danger, and seemed always most cheerful when exposed to almost insurmountable hardships. A piece of bread and a draught of water was often his sole repast; and, if he tasted of a wild boar or a stag, it was the well-earned fruit of a laborious chase. Dextrous in arms, he was ignorant of fear; his disposition could bend to every situation of life, but his heart naturally tended to ferocity; in every deed of mischief, he had a heart to resolve, a head to contrive, and a hand to execute. To a mind like that of Alexis, inactivity was a dreadful restraint; and he impatiently waited the healing of his wound, that he might return to his favorite enjoyments. In

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his messages to the King, he continually deplored the destiny which had compelled him to quit his Sovereign's side; and declared his purpose to return to his duty, the moment he was allowed so to do by the physicians who attended him.

The Palace of Zurbad stood in a beautiful valley, surrounded by lofty mountains, whose sides were covered with vineyards, and displayed a most enchanting prospect. The royal gardens extended on each side of the Palace nearly to the foot of the hills, and were disposed in such a manner as to command the admiration of every beholder. Fountains were displayed to meet the eye in every direction, whose distant murmurs formed a pleasing contrast to the more harmonious sounds of the various birds which sung among the numerous branches of the surrounding shrubberies, which formed cool and pleasant retreats from the intense rays of the sun-beams.

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The deep wounds which Alexis had received baffled for some time the united skill of the physicians; but, at length the symptoms appeared more favorable, and his speedy recovery was joyfully anticipated. Among the attendants who waited on him was a beautiful female, the niece of one of the nobles, who had formerly been an inseparable companion of the father of Alexis. She had been in the Queen's train till her death, and now held a situation about the person of the Princess. Her father was chief physician to Maximin; and he, being more particularly anxious in his care of the favorite of his Royal Master, had enjoined his daughter to attend to the wants of Alexis during his illness. When the favorable change had taken place in his health, the mind of Alexis was forcibly stricken with the beauty and artless simplicity of his lovely attendant, and he experienced sensations which till now he had been a total

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stranger to. By the persuasive eloquence of his tongue, and the solemn promise of marriage so soon as he should be sufficiently recovered to return to the camp, and claim the sanction of the King, he quickly won the affections of the beautiful Mariana; and when he discovered the impression he had made on her innocent heart, he soon found means to profit from the avowal of her regard, and ultimately triumphed over the hapless object of his deception. His strength was now established, and he had already fixed the day of his departure to the camp;—when one evening, while sitting at his chamber-window, the stillness of the scene was suddenly interrupted by the sound of a lute, accompanied by a voice which displayed the most exquisite sweetness, and breathed forth the tenderest strains. As the sound approached, he waited with impatience to behold the minstrel, whose skill had so fixed his attention, and

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filled him with such pleasure. Two females appeared beneath his window, one of whom he quickly discerned to be Mariana; but her companion, who surpassed in beauty any one he had ever beheld, and who appeared of a majestic and noble mien, he had never seen before. They passed on, and entered one of the surrounding avenues, while the eager eyes of Alexis continued to follow them till the intervening trees and shrubs hid them from his enraptured view. Still the distant notes of the lute were wafted to his ear by the gentle breeze, till they died away as the fair minstrels pursued their walk among the numerous windings of the garden. Though the sound no longer vibrated on his ear, still the beautiful form of the stranger was present to his fancy, and he passed the night without rest.

The following day, when Mariana visited him at the usual hour, he could not suppress his eager anxiety to learn

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who was the lovely stranger that accompanied her the preceding evening. She informed him it was the Princess Orsinda, the youngest daughter of the King. Alexis, though the favorite of her father, had never seen the Princess; for, it is a custom of that country to seclude the females of the Royal Family from the public sight, until they were demanded in marriage.—Notwithstanding this information of her high condition, Alexis already cherished the hope of obtaining the object of his desire, and determined on exerting his power over the hapless Mariana to induce her to employ her influence with the Princess to grant him an interview, and an opportunity to declare his love. Alarmed at his design, the luckless victim of his seducing arts urged her claims to the vows which he had proffered her, and entreated him to fulfil his solemn promises, and save her from the disgrace and infamy which must inevitably ensue, if he much lon-

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ger delayed the union which he had so often sworn to make. But Alexis was bent on pursuing his design on the Princess: yet, fearful of driving Mariana to desperation, and thereby probably defeating his projects, he endeavoured to soothe her by wickedly declaring, that if she would assist him in this undertaking, and aid him to accomplish his wishes with the Princess, in the same manner as she herself had before consented, that, in the end, the reward of her faithful services should be the marriage she desired. After using his utmost exertions, by alternate threats and promises, he at length prevailed upon the already guilty Mariana to forward his pernicious views; and it was not long before she succeeded in exciting the curiosity of her Royal Mistress to behold a man, who was represented to her by her confidante as a person of such superior endowments. Still, however, there was a timid reluctance in the Royal Maid to

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consent to his being introduced to her; but one evening, when she had retired into an arbor, accompanied by Mariana, who had purposely led her to the spot, and had artfully introduced the discourse concerning Alexis,—suddenly he appeared before them! The Princess would have instantly retired, but the youth, seizing her trembling hand, upon his knees entreated her to stay and hear his protestations, and with some little difficulty he succeeded. Though their first interview was of short duration, it had sufficiently impressed the Princess with the apparent amiable qualities of Alexis. Their interviews soon became more frequent; and, as their mutual inclinations increased, the wretched Mariana daily perceived the cold neglect of her perjured seducer; and too late was convinced of the imprudence of her zeal in serving his cause with the Princess, and anticipated the fatal certainty of her own destruction. Her fears were

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shortly after confirmed, when her Royal Mistress acquainted her with the intelligence that Alexis was about to set out for the camp, to solicit her father's consent to their marriage :—for, it must be observed, that, though Alexis would have entertained no scruples of conscience to have sacrificed the virtue of the Princess to his unprincipled desire, as he had already done that of the lovely Mariana, yet his ambition was more particularly excited by the prospect of an alliance with the family of his Sovereign ; and, as Maximin had no heir, his hopes were elated with the idea of succeeding to his dominions.

With sensations of the most poignant grief, Mariana heard the day named for the departure of Alexis ; and, at the next interview, she tenderly reproached him with his treachery ; nor was he able with all his artifice to calm the tortured bosom of his lovely victim. Alternately she reviled and intreated, and conjured him to pity the situation to which she must be re-

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duced, when the fruit of her illicit love would draw down upon her the indignation of her kindred and the everlasting reproach of the world. Unmoved by the anguish of her feelings, he coldly entreated her to moderate her distress; and on the day appointed set out for the camp, his mind wholly engrossed with the idea of his future greatness.

On his arrival in the army, he was cordially welcomed by Maximin; and the soldiers testified their joy by loud acclamations and public rejoicings; for, Alexis was equally the favorite of the troops as he was of the King, being admired for his uncommon strength and heroic courage. The army was then upon the point of making their last excursion into the mountains before they returned to the capital; and every thing being ready, and the hour of marching fixed, Alexis did not deem it a proper time to mention his purpose, but reserved its disclosure till the return of the army. Early in the morn-

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ing, the trumpet sounded, the troops were marshalled, the generals and officers repaired to their different stations, and the warlike bands were in motion, preserving the most compact order.— The King placed his favorite near him, as was his former custom, and the whole army moved forward on its way. In a few days, they were encountered by an immense multitude, who maintained a long and obstinate struggle; nor was the victory obtained without great loss on the side of the King, and a dreadful slaughter of the enemy. — In the heat of the action, the King was unhorsed, and was in imminent danger of being trampled to death, when he was released from his perilous situation by the desperate valor of Alexis, who slew two of the enemy of gigantic stature with his own hand, one of whom had wounded the King, and was about to repeat the deadly blow. Alexis seated him on his own horse, and led him out of the battle to a place

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of safety. The conflict was however continued with unabated vigour, till at last victory was declared against the enemy, and the Tartars fled in confusion from the field of slaughter. The triumphant host then returned, and the King having recovered from his fatigue, was unbounded in his protestations of regard for his deliverer, bidding him to name himself the reward of his faithful services. The artful Alexis thought this a most favourable moment to open the secret of his mind; he immediately acquainted the King with his affection for his daughter, and threw himself at the Monarch's feet to implore forgiveness for his presumption, but earnestly solicited him to grant the accomplishment of his desire and his daughter's wishes.—Maximin hesitated;—but friendship for his favorite prevailed over the consideration of birth, and he gratified the heart of Alexis with hope, when he should have inquired of his daughter what

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were her sentiments towards the union. In a few days they entered the capital in triumph, and Maximin and his victorious followers were welcomed with the loudest acclamations. The King shortly after visited the Palace of Zurbad, to ascertain his daughter's disposition towards the marriage; and, finding the Princess's heart deeply engaged in affection for the youthful warrior, he gave his consent, and an early day was fixed on for the marriage. During the preparations which were making for the celebration of the nuptials, the state of mind of the unhappy Mariana can better be conceived than described; as yet she had kept the secret of her indiscretion and the villany of Alexis from the knowledge of her friends and relatives; but, now that all her hopes were fled, and as she in vain had endeavored to obtain even a private interview with her seducer since his return, she took the desperate resolution, so often prompted by despair,

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of saving herself from the approaching disgrace which must have shortly attended her, and of puting an end for ever to the unavailing attempts she had made to recal the truant affection of Alexis. — Unable to endure the hourly pangs she underwent from the sight of the splendid preparations for the nuptials of the Princess, whose secret joy, so often disclosed to the confidential ear of Mariana, served only to wound the poor victim of seduction more deeply; and, though she might, by a disclosure of his villany, have impeded, if not wholly prevented, his ambitious views; yet her tender bosom could not bear the thought of injuring the cause and obstructing the happiness of that man, whom she still so tenderly loved, though he had destroyed her peace and innocence for ever.—On the very evening, therefore, of the marriage, she finally put in execution her rash design; and, after writing a tender letter to her father and

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brothers, and a pathetic address to the faithless Alexis, the author of her premature dissolution and the destroyer of all her earthly comfort, she drained a cup of the most baneful poison, and expired in the greatest agonies, in that very apartment, which had formerly been occupied by Alexis, and which had been the fatal scene of her indiscretion and the witness of the perjured vows of her guilty seducer.—In consequence of the universal joy and festivity which prevailed in the Palace, this calamitous event was not discovered till the following morning, when the distorted body of the once-beautiful Mariana was found by the domestics, and the two letters which lay on her clay-cold bosom were carried according to the directions.—Hard and ferocious as was the heart of Alexis, the melancholy fate of the once-innocent and accomplished girl, for a short time disturbed his mind ; but, unconscious that another letter, containing

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the circumstances which led to her untimely death, had been written by the dying victim to her father, he concluded that the secret of their amours had perished with her, and he therefore soon regained his spirits, and suffered no compunctions of conscience to interrupt the full tide of his present enjoyments.—But the heart of the unhappy father of the ill-fated fair was torn with the alternate pangs of sorrow and revenge. He had two sons, who had constantly accompanied the armies of the King, and had been trained in the pursuit of danger and renown;—to them the afflicted parent communicated the cause of their late lovely sister's death, and their minds were instantly roused to vengeance! Ever daring and impetuous, they were about to determine immediately on some rash act to gratify their rage; but their father, more wise and cautious, quickly foresaw the ill-effects likely to ensue by blindly rushing on

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immediate vengeance, and conceived that it would prove a useless attempt openly to accuse the Prince, who might deny the accusation ; and prevailed at length on his sons to wait an opportunity, when some future expedition should call Alexis to the camp, when they might wreak their fury on him, without the hazard of so much danger as would attend their present attempts. With great difficulty he induced them to comply, and for the present lay aside their revenge.—Meanwhile the rejoicings on account of the Royal nuptials continued without diminution for many days, and every subject of Maximin seemed to partake of the joy which the Monarch felt in the happiness of his children.

Some months elapsed, and no circumstances had transpired to give hopes to the enfuriated relatives of the late injured and neglected Mariana ; at length a dawn of vengeance opened to the view of the afflicted brothers. The time

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had arrived when the annual tribute of the Court of Persia was to be sent; and, as it was always usual to employ some nobleman of the greatest distinction upon those occasions, Maximin fixed upon his newly-created son-in-law to be the bearer of this customary present. — Preparations were accordingly made for his departure; and Mariana's father, who was, as has been before observed, chief physician to the King, solicited the favor of the Monarch to admit his two sons into the train of the Prince: this was readily granted, and the object of their unceasing anxiety seemed now within their grasp. The Princess, whose increasing affection for her lord was daily more and more apparent, could not bear the thoughts of separation, and solicited the sanction of her husband and Royal Father to accompany Alexis in this expedition. But Maximin wished not to intermingle this embassy, which was the last he had purposed ever to send,

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with any views of pleasure. Alexis was instructed to make the most scrutinizing observations on the strength and internal policy of the Persian Court; to inspect the fortresses and castles as he proceeded on his journey; to observe the dispositions of the courtiers; and to take advantage of the discontented and rebellious, if any such he discovered, and induce them, by large bribes and larger promises, to favour the design of Maximin. Above all, he was to obtain an accurate account of the forces which could be brought into the field upon any sudden emergency, and notice the most proper time, and the most favourable point, for the King to make his grand attack. With such a commission, and such end to accomplish, it was not judged proper for the Princess to accompany her lord.

When the physician had solicited the honor of his sons accompanying Alexis, the Monarch, with the concur-

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rence of the unsuspecting Prince, had likewise confided to his care the selection of the chief part of the attendants; and, thus impowered, he had not failed to procure such persons as would answer the intended purpose. Thus all things conspired to give the afflicted brothers a fit opportunity to wreak their fury on the guilty author of their family's dishonour, and the wanton despoiler and destroyer of their innocent but ill-fated sister. Surrounded, therefore, by enemies of whom he had not the smallest suspicion, and having selected only a few friends of his own to accompany him, he set forward on his journey to the Persian Court.—In a short time they passed the confines of Hira, and entered the territories of the Great King, travelling at an easy rate, to afford Alexis every facility of performing the secret object of his mission.

In the mean time, Hafaz and Aladin communicated their vengeful design to

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their partizans of assassinating the Prince; but, willing to veil the true cause, and save the public exposition of their sister's dishonour, they represented to the conspirators that they had received some very recent and gross affront from Alexis, of which, honor demanded that nothing but his blood could wash away the stain. Already had they made some progress towards the heart of the empire, and had pitched their tents in a delightful valley for the night. The Prince had retired early to repose, when his faithful page hastily entered his tent, and informed him that a party of his guards had silently assembled round the tent, that he had overheard some expressions of a threatening nature, and exhorted his master to rise and arm himself. Alexis had scarcely time to throw his cloak round him, and grasp his falchion, before the conspirators surrounded the tent, and the two enraged brothers, bursting into his presence, with the most

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violent imprecations, reproached him with being the cause of the death of their unhappy sister, and told him that the hour of vengeance had arrived;—that resistance was vain, the soldiers having joined their cause;—and that his instant death could alone satisfy their revenge!—Undismayed by their threats, and totally regardless of the perils which surrounded him, he quickly assaulted the foremost of the brothers, and with one blow of his sabre laid him dead at his feet:—at the same instant he wounded the other mortally, but who made good his retreat to the conspirators without, urging them to fall upon the Prince, and hew him in pieces.—Alexis waited not for their attack;—he rushed out of the tent, and, after killing and wounding several, he fought his way through, and gained in safety that part of his little camp which consisted of his own immediate friends. These soon returned with him to quell the tumult; and the two bro-

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thers being both slain, the rest of the conspirators laid down their arms, and sued for mercy, casting the whole blame upon their slaughtered leaders. Alexis, finding by their confession that they had not been made acquainted with the true cause of the conspiracy, readily pardoned them; and the next day they pursued their journey in peace.

But though Alexis, by his courage and personal valour, had escaped this snare into which he had unconsciously fallen, his eyes were opened to the revengeful designs of the physician, and the whole plot was clearly developed to his understanding.—He was, however, still inclined to think that the King and the Princess were unacquainted with the circumstance of the true cause of the lamentable death of Mariana, and conjectured that her father would wait the return of the embassy, and learn the success of his scheme of assassination, before he would

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lay the matter open to the King; but he also resolved on the sacrifice of the father likewise at his return, to preserve the secret for ever, and retaliate the evil which had been so deeply contrived for him. Thus determined, he forbade all farther inquiry into the circumstances which had led to the affair, ascribing it to the hopes of plunder in the two brothers; and thus they journeyed on, nothing farther of consequence occurring till their arrival at the Persian Court.

The Prince was received with the ceremony due to his rank; and, though he attended to the instructions given him by Maximin, he nevertheless entered into the full enjoyment of the luxuries and boundless pleasures to which the Court of Persia was so particularly addicted. While he was indulging in every voluptuous pleasure, he was suddenly surprised by the arrival of a hasty messenger from the King his father, desiring his instant

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return. He was at a loss to conjecture the reason of so abrupt a request, especially as he had not yet had sufficient time or opportunity to complete the true object of his mission; and he imagined that if the physician had made known his guilt with respect to Mariana, such a circumstance would never operate as a sufficient ground to render such a hasty recal necessary, especially as his mission was connected with such important concerns. Nevertheless, he readily obeyed, and the next day took leave of the Great King, who loaded him with some valuable presents, and he immediately set out on his return.

Shortly after Alexis had begun his journey to the Persian Court, Maximin had ventured to disclose his grand design to some of his trusty friends, among whom was his chief physician, the father of the unhappy Mariana; who applauded the bold design, and anticipated the most complete suc-

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cess. Upon the fatal night of the massacre of the two brothers, one of the wounded conspirators had made his escape, and returned to their father to report the disastrous failure of their plot. When, therefore, he became acquainted with the horrid tale, he quickly conceived the full extent of the danger to which he should be exposed on the return of the Prince; and he was convinced that nothing could avert his final destruction but the adoption of some desperate scheme, with a view as well to screen himself as to wreak his vengeance on the guilty author of all his calamities. He instantly told the King that he had received certain intelligence that the Prince had treacherously, and ungratefully, betrayed to the King of Persia the secret design which Maximin had formed against that Monarch; and that Alexis had received the full assurance of the crown of Hira, on the dethronement of his sovereign, as the reward of his perfidy.

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To confirm this tale, he produced the fugitive assassins, who he affirmed had fled from the service of the Prince to inform the King of his danger. Alarmed at this seeming peril, and ever hasty in his resolves, Maximin instantly dispatched a messenger to recal the Prince; and shortly afterwards sent a strong guard, to meet him on his return, and take him into custody. They encountered the unsuspecting Prince as he was repassing the frontier, and instantly conveyed him to a very strong prison at a distance from the capital. —This done, the physician, to improve the advantage he had gained, bribed many more of the conspirators, who the Prince had pardoned, to confirm his assertions. The King was also farther led to believe the accusation, on account of the great and sudden preparations of the King of Persia; though they were in reality designed for the actual protection of his territories against the encroaching warlike

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followers of Mahomet. Fully impressed, however, with the truth of the physician's accusation, he refused to listen to the repeated application of the Prince to be told the nature of his offence, and face his accusers; nor would he hearken to the earnest and incessant intreaties of his disconsolate and heart-broken daughter in behalf of her husband.

The prison was most strictly guarded, and all intercourse whatever with the Prince most rigidly denied. Alexis contemplated with surprise and indignation the dungeon in which he was confined.—A small room was allotted him, and he was not permitted to hold any conversation with the officers of the prison. His food was conveyed to him through an aperture formed in the wall, which was always immediately closed again, and strongly secured. A small window close to the ceiling afforded a scanty portion of light, and all around him was silence and horror.

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The mind of Alexis, naturally impatient and formed for action, could ill brook this reverse of fortune; he incessantly perplexed his mind to conjecture what could have occasioned the wrath of Maximin; nor did his conscience charge himself with having merited such rigorous and unworthy treatment at his hands. His gloomy thoughts then glanced on the unhappy fate of Mariana; but, though his heart acknowledged the injury done towards that lovely victim, yet he could not imagine how that affair could have provoked such a terrible punishment; and he was persuaded that the Princess, the extent of whose affection he had no cause to doubt, would never have consented to resign him to such a destiny. His tortured mind, therefore, still remained bewildered as to the cause of his imprisonment.

Some time had now elapsed; and, though the Princess had incessantly wearied her Royal Father with the most

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earnest petitions for her husband's release, or else soliciting to be made a partner in his captivity, yet Maximin remained firm in his resolve; while his anxiety and suspicions were kept alive by the constant insinuations of the physician, and the certain intelligence of the unusual warlike preparations of the Persian Monarch. But the King did not, in the mean time, neglect to provide for his own safety; he visited all the castles and fortifications on the borders of his territories, repaired the strong fortresses, supplied them with provisions and warlike stores, and stationed therein numerous garrisons. Meantime, Alexis was passing his melancholy hours in his dreary abode; his haughty soul, prompted by despair at the reflection of the implacable temper of the King, had nearly resolved on his own destruction, but he was diverted from this design by an unlooked-for discovery.—Though the window of his dungeon was small, and

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placed near the roof, he determined to climb up to it, and discover, if possible, some likelihood of escape. He began, therefore, with great diligence to pick out small apertures in the wall, to serve as steps to ascend to the window. With the buckle of his cloak he commenced his work ; and, though the stubborn texture of the wall long resisted his efforts, (being formed of that extraordinary hard cement, well known in that part of the world, called bitumen, of which the immense walls of Babylon were composed,) still he succeeded in making a hole ; but, in penetrating a little farther, to his great surprise, he found he had made a way quite through the wall, into some other dark dungeon.

A brighter gleam of hope now glanced across his mind : he proceeded in his operations ; and, by diligent perseverance and caution, lest the noise should betray him, he quickly made a cavity sufficiently large to admit his

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body. With cautious steps he passed a long passage without perceiving the smallest ray of light; and, after searching in vain for an opening, he returned disappointed to his dungeon. Supposing still that there must be some other communication with this place, and not discouraged by his first unsuccessful attempt, in the middle of the night he again ventured into the dreary passage. He now examined the walls on each side very diligently as he proceeded; but, after a tedious search, he could not discover any door or least sign of an outlet; and, weary and disheartened, he once more returned to his dungeon.

A daring scheme now entered his imagination;—he had often endeavored to draw from the jailer, when he daily appeared at the hole before described to give him his provisions and water, the reason of his confinement and the anger of the King, but he never received any answer; the man pre-

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served a constant and inflexible silence; and the offer of the most brilliant rewards, or the threats of the greatest vengeance, were alike fruitless:—he now thought that if he were to secrete himself in this gloomy passage, taking with him some provisions, and replacing the substance to fill up the cavity of the wall, that the jailer would quickly miss him; and that, if he should not discover or be acquainted with the place of his retreat, would naturally suppose that he had made his escape from the window, to which he previously designed to climb, to bend one of the bars, and inflict various other marks of violence, to mislead and deceive them; though he found from inspection that it would be impossible to effect his escape from the window.

Should it fall out as he wished, he imagined that the door of his prison, which had never been opened from the time of his first entrance, would be left unbarred, and the prison itself less ri-

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gidly guarded, when he might venture from his concealment, and finally accomplish his escape. No sooner had he formed his plan than he put it in execution;—he preserved a quantity of his food for some days; he carefully formed a portion of the fragments of the wall, which he moistened for that purpose with the water he received for his daily drink, and fitted it exactly to the size of the cavity he had made; in the middle of which he fastened the buckle of his cloak, to enable him to draw it close after him, and fit it to its place; and he lastly, in the middle of the night, made the necessary attack upon the window, to mislead his keepers, and preserve him from discovery. Having accomplished every thing according to his mind, at break of day he committed himself to his hiding-place, carefully pulled up the fragment after him, which fitted exactly the hole through which he had crept, and there waited the issue of his scheme.

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As Alexis had conjectured, so it happened :—the jailer instantly missed his prisoner, from not hearing the customary questions, and shortly afterwards the Prince heard him enter the dungeon with a guard of soldiers :—their attention was instantly directed to the window, and with the greatest joy he heard them declare, *that* way was the only one by which he could possibly escape ; and with this conviction he heard them depart. Elated with the success of his plan thus far, he turned his thoughts to effect his actual liberation ; but, to his infinite mortification, upon inspecting the prison-door on the return of night, he found it fast as heretofore, and that it would defy all his attempts to force his way. Again, therefore, he retreated to his passage, in hopes an opportunity would shortly occur to accomplish his design.

On hearing of the supposed escape of Alexis, Maximin gave way to the most ungovernable rage. He ordered

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the jailer and the guards, who had the care of the prisoner, to suffer instantly under the hands of the executioner ;— and the physician, whose fears were more particularly excited for his own safety, but still bent on the most exemplary vengeance for the wrongs he had endured, insinuated to the King, it was more than probable that the Princess, who, he observed, had of a sudden become more tranquil, had bribed the guards to let her husband escape.

The King, blinded by passion and revenge, suffered himself to be led away by the malicious counsel of the physician, and listened to the suggestion that his daughter had conspired with the traitorous Prince, and had contrived to release him ; and he imagined the enraged Prince would now join the assembled forces of the Persian Monarch. Without farther deliberation, he ordered the Princess to be seized, conveyed to the same prison,

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and placed in the very dungeon whence Alexis was supposed to have escaped. A more confidential guard was assigned her than had been stationed there before, and the unhappy and innocent Princess was immediately carried to the wretched place of her confinement. Meanwhile, Alexis had nearly begun to despair. The prison, being seldom in use but on very extraordinary occasions, had been totally deserted since the day of his supposed escape; he had in vain endeavored to explore an opening in his dreary hiding-place, or force the door of the dungeon; and his provisions had been for some time exhausted.—Driven almost to madness at the prospect of a lingering and inglorious death, he was on the point of beating out his brains in despair against the walls of his dungeon, when he suddenly heard the noise of the enormous doors grating upon their rusty hinges —footsteps advanced—he flew to his secret door, and had barely time to

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enter, and draw the fragment of the wall after him, before his dungeon was unbarred; and, from the bustle and the indistinct sounds which he could collect, he imagined it must be some new prisoner which had arrived.

After the jailers had withdrawn, a solemn pause ensued, when he was surprised with the sighs and groans of a female; and, while he listened with the most fixed attention, these words struck his astonished ear:——"Ah! Alexis, my loved lord! had I been permitted to visit this gloomy mansion, this abode of wretchedness, while thy dear form was doomed to languish here, these horrid walls would have filled my heart with no terrors; safe in thy loved arms, I would have been content to brave every danger, to undergo all hardships, to endure the ungovernable rage of my misguided father!—but, alas! thou art far away, exposed to new perils, surrounded with dangers on every side, and may never ar-

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rive to rescue thy faithful Orsinda from the cruel destiny to which she is doomed!"

For some minutes he remained fixed to the spot with astonishment; but, when he collected his scattered senses, he burst from his concealment, and the Princess beheld before her the sunken and almost famished form of her long-lost Lord! During the first rapturous moments of joy at this unexpected and almost miraculous meeting, the gloomy horrors of the dungeon were forgotten in their endearing caresses. As the same precautions were not observed by the guards towards their female prisoner as were formerly used by those who had the care of the Prince, the necessaries for her support were brought to her through the common door of the dungeon, instead of through the aperture, which has been before described; for, the former unfortunate jailer, being well acquainted with the desperate and daring character of Alexis, had used

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that method, not choosing to risk the opening of the door when once it was closed upon his prisoner ;—and after a few days had elapsed, the Princess was permitted to have one of her own female attendants to wait on her during the day, but who was constrained to depart always in the evening. Her absence was the signal for the approach of the Prince from his darksome abode; for as yet they had not dared to confide the secret to the attendant. Thus were these Heirs of the Throne of the Kingdom of Hira obliged to dwell in a dungeon's gloom, partaking together of the scanty allowance afforded to his daughter by the inexorable Maximin!

It was now time that Alexis should employ his ingenuity and courage to escape from this dreadful thraldom.—First, he suggested that the Princess should require the aperture, through which he had formerly received his provisions, to be set open, as absolutely necessary for the sake of air;

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this, as they supposed, was immediately granted, as the jailer was under no apprehension of the Princess being able to make her escape that way.—They then found it necessary that they should have some assistance from a friend at liberty, to provide a horse in readiness, should he be fortunate enough to escape from the prison-walls; and they therefore determined to confide in the female, who had ever shewn herself particularly attached to her Royal Mistress. This was done; and it was agreed that she should come the next day upon a fleet horse, leaving it at a short distance from the prison, in the care of a trusty page.

The faithful attendant performed her task; the horse was procured, and in readiness: the jailer came at the usual hour, in the dusk of the evening, to let out the servant; and no sooner was the dungeon-door closed, than Alexis darted through the aperture; descended into the court of the prison, and en-

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tered the garden unobserved;—here he had a high wall to climb, whose strait sides afforded him no prospect of attaining the summit; a happy thought glanced across his mind—he seized in his Herculean grasp a small tree, which grew at some distance from the wall, and, by exerting to the utmost his most wonderful strength, he tore it up by the roots, and, bearing it on his shoulders, placed it against the wall; in an instant he gained the top, dropped without difficulty on the other side, and flew swiftly to the place appointed, where he found the faithful female, impatiently waiting his arrival. —He mounted with sensations of the most exquisite kind, bade her assure her Royal Mistress that he would speedily return to her release, or perish in the attempt; then flew across the country, and was quickly lost to the view.

All that night and the following day, he travelled without the smallest intermission, when towards evening his

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horse fell dead through excessive fatigue.—He then pursued his journey on foot, and had already gained the passes of the mountains, which formed the frontiers of Hira, where he would quickly have eluded all pursuit, when he was suddenly surrounded by a troop of horsemen.

On the first intelligence of his former supposed escape, a high price had been set on his head, and numerous squadrons had been dispersed in divers directions to retake him; his person and dress had been most minutely described; and, though hitherto their search had of course been fruitless, yet the attempt had not been given up.—The Prince was instantly recognized, and they prepared to seize their prize; but Alexis, though unarmed, snatched the soldier's lance who first attempted to lay hold of him, and in a moment laid two of the troop dead at his feet; but in this effort the lance was broken, and being exhausted with fatigue and want

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of rest, he was quickly overpowered and secured.—They placed him upon a horse, tied his feet under the belly of the beast, whose bridle was also made fast on each side to two of their company; and in this manner they hastened on towards the nearest fortification, there to secure him till the King's pleasure should be known.—But night came on, and, as they passed by the side of an old castle in ruins, Alexis desired permission to stop to perform the necessities of nature: he was allowed to do so, and by the help of the broken lance, which he still held, he placed himself on the other side of a fragment of the decayed wall.—His fruitful genius again conceived a prospect of eluding his guards.—He fixed his broken staff in the ground, on the top of which he hung his cloak and cap, to engage the attention of the soldiers, and, aided by the dusk of the evening, he crept along the side of the wall, passed by the whole troop, and

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gained the bank of the roaring stream of a rapid river, which flowed at a small distance at the foot of the ruins.—The scheme succeeded—the soldiers, deceived by the appearance of their prisoner on the other side of the broken wall, waited quietly for him; and it was not till Alexis had plunged into the wide and roaring flood, and after a desperate struggle had reached the distant shore in safety, that they discovered, too late, the trick which had been so successfully played upon them to elude their vigilance.—Not supposing that Alexis had crossed the dangerous stream, they scoured the country round during the whole night; and at length returned to the capital with the certainty that Alexis had reached the Persian dominions.

Meanwhile, the Prince pursued his way, soon regained another passage in the mountains, and early the next morning found himself safe in Persia, and out of the reach of his inflexible

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father-in-law. He continued the same route through which he had so lately passed in all the pomp of royal splendour, and he soon arrived at the hospitable castle of a Persian nobleman, where he had been magnificently entertained during his former journey.—Here he received every necessary attention, and artfully informed the owner, that he had on his road again to the Persian Court been encountered by a numerous body of the roving Arabs, and was the only one of all his train who had escaped the sword of the robbers.—He immediately was provided with raiment and money, and, thus recruited, he again set forward.

It had been previously concerted by Alexis and the Princess, as they were both wholly ignorant of the true cause of the displeasure of the King, that he should, on his effecting his escape, go directly to the sister of the Princess, who, as before related, was married to a Persian nobleman, and implore their

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mediation to prevail on Maximin to liberate his daughter. To this Prince's province he, therefore, directed his course, and in a few days arrived at his Castle. He was received with the utmost kindness by his noble kinsman, who listened to his story with attention and concern, and the gallant Persian proposed to go himself to the Court of Maximin, to learn the cause of his anger, and to endeavour to pacify his wrath.—Some present domestic circumstance, however, prevented the immediate departure of the generous Conradin, but the necessary preparations were put in forwardness for his journey.—Meanwhile Alexis was entertained by the Prince and his fair bride in the most sumptuous manner. Though he had ever thought the Princess Orsinda a most rare and accomplished beauty, he was forcibly stricken with the elegant and majestic demeanor of her sister, his noble hostess; the more he discerned the lustre of her

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charms, the more his roving heart became enslaved; in the contemplation of her dignified deportment and commanding features, he forgot the lovely innocence, the mild and endearing fondness, and the soft expressive countenance of his unhappy wife.—His heart, little inclined to constancy, and much less to gratitude or duty, conceived the dark and treacherous design of supplanting his kinsman in his love, and of depriving him of his domestic happiness for ever; and this too at the moment that he was availing himself of his friendship, and partaking of his hospitality.

When once resolved, it was the invariable maxim of Alexis to put his resolution into immediate practice.—His first attempt was to endeavor if he could discern any partiality in the behaviour of Zara towards him;—he watched every motion, he attended to every action, and formed his judgement on the most trifling and insigni-

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ficant circumstances; but in nothing could he draw any favorable conclusion, to hope the least success to his infamous design.—Zara, however, was by no means insensible to the exterior graces of Alexis; and her heart had already formed comparisons between the martial demeanor and manly beauty of the Prince and the more mild, placid, and benignant, virtues of her Lord.—She had also observed the assiduous attention and officious politeness of the Prince towards her; and she was not so great a novice in the art of intrigue as not perfectly to understand the meaning of his penetrating glances, his half-suppressed sigh, and apparent negligence of every other object when she was present.—Convinced of the certainty of her triumph over his heart, dazzled with the graces of his person, and charmed with his gallantry, she soon formed a partiality in her breast for her guilty lover; at once renouncing her claim to the possession of ho-

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nour and virtue.—But, cautious in her resolves, she chose to hide from her admirer the triumph he had acquired over her affections, and the tumult he had formed in her breast, lest a too easy compliance with his wishes should deprive her of his regard.—But she little knew the heart of Alexis.—Hitherto, he had displayed before her eyes only the softer and more engaging part of his character; yet, had he imagined for a moment that to gain her consent had been a hopeless vision, he would not have scrupled to have violated all the laws of friendship, hospitality, and love, and have pitched upon some scheme of violence to gratify his unbounded passion; for, as before observed, when once resolved, it was his next and immediate step to act upon this resolution.—Still, however, caution and fear on the part of Zara precluded an opportunity for Alexis to declare his guilty passion; and the dark mischief-brooding mind of the Prince had al-

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ready formed a plan for effecting, by stratagem, what he feared he could not accomplish by open consent; when chance threw a circumstance in the way which soon revealed the secrets of each other's hearts.

Conradin had proposed a morning hunt in the forests round his Castle, and the Prince was glad to employ a portion of the time which hung heavy on his mind in his favorite amusement. —At break of day they rode into the wood, accompanied by a train of domestics, and Zara rode between Alexis and her Lord.—They started an immense boar from a thicket, which directed its flight into the gloomy forest, and the hunters were quickly scattered in the pursuit.—Through design or destiny, Alexis soon found himself alone with the object of his constant desire, and, while he was meditating upon the manner of his attack, the horse of the Princess stumbled over the underwood, and threw her to the

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ground.—Alexis flew to her rescue; and, as she seemed stunned and fainting, he uncovered her bosom to give her air, and perceived a small locket, which, to his infinite surprize, contained his own portrait executed by herself; fired with the thoughts of this discovery, he ventured to print a kiss upon her yet livid lips. While he indulged his eager eyes with the display of her beauty as she lay in his arms, the returning blood pressed into her beauteous cheeks, and, as he rapturously kissed her uncovered bosom, a heaving sigh warned him of re-animated life, and she once more opened her eyes.—As a mutual discovery of their inclinations had now transpired, all farther reserve became useless; nor would the enraptured desire of Alexis allow him to forego this advantageous moment.

The noise of the hunters had died away upon the ear, the scene was still and inviting—he raised her—she lean-

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ed on his bosom—he led her to a verdant bank, composed her ruffled spirits, revived her with some water from a neighbouring brook, and finally fixed for ever their own infamy, and the disgrace of the much-injured generous Conradin!

They now deemed it fit to ride back to the Castle, where they were soon after joined by the hunters; and Zara met the eyes of Conradin with an unblushing countenance.—Fatigue was the reason she assigned for her return, and which passed as truth with the unsuspecting Prince.—Frequent opportunities now occurred to the lovers, without the smallest alarm being occasioned in Conradin, and he had now fixed on the day of his departure to to the Court of Maximin in behalf of his traitorous guest.

On the morning after the hunt, he had dispatched a slave to his brother, whose province was contiguous to his

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own, to inform him of his intended journey, and to request his attendance at the Castle during his absence, to entertain and be a companion for Alexis. —But Fate had yet much to do before he could execute his benevolent purpose.—The scene in the forest had not been so secret, but it was observed by a eunuch belonging to Conradin, who had also been separated from the hunters, and had staid, by some accident, near the place of their guilty intercourse.—He had luckily avoided discovery, and, after their departure, had joined the hunters on their return.—He had resolved to acquaint his Lord with the infidelity of his Mistress; but, before he could have that opportunity, which he had reserved for the following day, he was pitched upon by his master to be the messenger to his brother.—The slave thought this was a better opportunity; for, he imagined he should obtain a double compensation,

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in proving his faithful attachment, by revealing the fatal secret to the brother as well as to his master.

It was some days' journey to and from the Castle of Conradin's relation; and in the interval of the slave's absence, and the delay of the knowledge of the fatal secret, the guilty lovers enjoyed the bent of their lustful appetites.—The evening of the return of the eunuch was the one preceding the departure of Conradin.—Already had he retired early to rest, purposing to set forwards at day-light the following morning:—his attendants also were taking repose, that they might have all in readiness by the first dawn of day.—The evening was serene and beautiful,—the warbling tenants of the grove had retired to rest,—the moon rose majestic above the battlements, and her pale beams glimmered through the trees, or played on the rising column of the fountain, which reflected innumerable spangles from its unceasing motion!—

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Alexis was already seated in the appointed bower, so often the scene of their guilty meetings, and was anxiously waiting the arrival of the Princess.—He heard the sound of approaching footsteps, and listened with eager attention, expecting quickly to clasp the willing fair in his arms; but the sound of the footsteps had suddenly ceased, and nothing was to be heard but the murmuring of the distant fountain.—Soon, however, he beheld the object of his desire gliding lightly over the flowery way, and they flew with rapture into each other's embrace!—Zara was loud in her exultation on the approaching departure of her Lord, who had now become in her eyes an irksome restraint upon her pleasure; and Alexis joined in the anticipation of the hours of uninterrupted love which they should share in the absence of Conradin.—Soft dalliance succeeded to mutual protestations of love and ten-

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derness—but Heaven had prepared an act of terror to close the guilty scene!

The slave, who had been sent to Conradin's brother to acquaint him with the purport of his journey to the Court of Maximin, and to invite him to his Castle to entertain Alexis in his absence, had, as before stated, returned at this time; he had already acquainted his master's brother with the treachery of Alexis towards his Lord, and the infidelity of his mistress; and this nobleman, roused with the sense of his family's dishonour, had dispatched the slave back in haste to inform his master of the whole affair, with an assurance that he should follow quickly, to ensure the infliction of the most exemplary vengeance on the unprincipled delinquent.

Conradin had retired to rest when the slave arrived; but the eunuch's suspicious eye had discerned Alexis proceeding to the garden, which he conjectured might lead to a repetition

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of what he had seen in the wood:—he therefore followed silently, and saw him enter the bower:—he waited some time to see the Princess arrive, but as that did not happen immediately, he softly approached the bower to listen if she were already there; and *his* were the footsteps which had caught the attentive ear of the expecting Prince;—at that moment the Princess appeared, and the eunuch just tarried to overhear the first transports of their meeting, and then hastily withdrew to inform his injured master; for, he naturally thought the best proof of his tale would be in summoning the Prince to be an eye-witness of the conduct of the treacherous pair!—He entered without ceremony the chamber of the sleeping Conradin, and, briefly recounting the horrid fact, urged him to follow his steps to the fatal spot!

Conradin snatched his sabre, and followed with unsteady pace and an agitated soul.—They passed the walk

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in cautious haste, while the light rustling of the leaves appeared to forebode approaching horror, resembling the awful silence of Nature before the bursting storm, which breaks with sudden crash over the devoted plains! ——They drew nigh the objects of their search—even the lustful kiss sounded in his frenzied ear—he heard the murmuring raptures of their mutual embrace!—he sickened with excess of rage, and his knees trembled—he was roused again by their whispers—and rushed at once upon the astonished lovers!

"Perfidious wretch!" exclaimed the enfuriated Conradin, "receive the reward of thy base ingratitude!"—and with these words he aimed a deadly blow at the prostrate Alexis; — while with equal rage he struck at the Princess! — but his passion frustrated his intention, and rendered his effort abortive. — Alexis, though wounded, sprung up in an instant, closed with

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the enraged husband, by dint of his superior strength threw him on the ground, and stamped his gigantic foot upon the neck of the unhappy Prince! his sabre dropped from his feeble grasp, which Alexis instantly plunged in his breast, and his life-blood flowed at the feet of his adulterous wife!

The slave, who had accompanied his master, stood horror-stricken at the scene; when Alexis, rightly judging that he had been the author of the discovery, with both hands seized him by the throat, and stretched him lifeless upon the dead body of his master. —Zara, though appalled at the dismal scene before her eyes, had sufficient presence of mind to recollect the dangers which surrounded her.—She represented to Alexis that it was necessary they should fly from the Castle, as the arrival of Conradin's brother was to be expected every hour. She, therefore, bade him strip the slave of his dress, with which she retired to her

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chamber, while Alexis hastened to secure horses for their swift conveyance from the fury of Conradin's enraged relatives. In a short time he was joined by the Princess, who had packed up her jewels and valuables, and emptied the coffers of her late much-injured husband ;—and, attired in the habit of the dead eunuch, she mounted a swift steed which Alexis had prepared for her, and they directed their course towards the Desert.

By the morning's dawn, they found themselves at the foot of a lofty mountain ; and, as hitherto they had pursued the strait road, Alexis thought it would be advisable, in order to elude pursuit, to strike out of the common track, and they entered a thick wood on the right.—Here their progress was much impeded by the thick underwood which obstructed the steps of their beasts, as also by the entangled branches of the trees, which bent in some places down to the ground. They found, at

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length, an open spot, and there they purposed to rest, and allow their horses to feed upon the verdant grass which appeared around.

The wound of Alexis, which, by reason of their precipitate flight, had hitherto been little thought of, now began to be very painful, and the Princess dressed it, and bound it up in the best manner she was able.—She had not forgotten to provide a few sweetmeats for their refreshment; and, after some hours rest, they remounted their horses, and pursued their way through the forest.

They travelled with difficulty, frequently interrupted by impenetrable clusters of trees, and immense and frightful precipices, which often obliged them to make a compass of great length to find a convenient pass;—and night overtook them while they were yet bewildered in the gloomy recesses of the surrounding woods. Tired and fatigued, but not dispirited, they

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sought a shelter from the night in a neighbouring thicket, and their horses were left to feed near the retreat.—Zara's haughty mind was not, however, free from some feelings of remorse, upon contemplating the fatal issue of her unlawful passion, but she sought relief from the secret admonitions of her heart in the embraces of her wicked and blood-stained paramour.

After a few hours rest, they rose to pursue their journey, and Alexis went forth to make ready their beasts:—he repaired to the spot where he had left them the preceding night, but they were not there—he continued seeking them in vain—he mounted some of the highest trees to discover if they had strayed afar off, but his labour was fruitless, and he returned to the thicket to acquaint Zara with the unwelcome tidings.

They were now obliged to pursue their route on foot, and had not proceeded far when they were startled with the sight of the body of one of

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their beasts half devoured, and the other at a little distance nearly in the same state. Sensible of the danger which they had escaped by being enclosed during the night in the thicket, which had, no doubt, saved them from a similar fate, they for a moment acknowledged in their hearts the mercy of Providence, who had preserved them from a death which their conduct had well merited at his hands; but these reflections were of short duration, and were quickly driven from their minds by the force of their innate wicked dispositions.

Alexis had been deceived by the length of the wood, in entering which, he now perceived he must have deviated greatly from the road he had purposed to go; and Zara became alarmed at the increasing obstructions which presented themselves to their view, and at the recollection of the peril which they had just escaped, as well as the prospect there was of being

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obliged to pass another night in the dreadful forest.

They continued their laborious journey till the declining sun bespoke the approach of evening; and, soon after, the gathering clouds seemed to portend a storm;—while yet they broke their way through the entwining brambles, weary of an endless struggle in endeavouring to explore an outlet, the distant thunder vibrated in their ears, and the rain began to descend in torrents.—— Alexis endeavoured to cheer his companion with the assurances of being soon able to regain the road, and Zara exerted all her strength and spirits to sustain the weight of the incessant fatigue she underwent.—Meanwhile the storm increased; the lightning darted round them with vivid glare, and the crashing thunder rolled most awfully over their heads.—Louder and louder peal followed peal with little intermission, and a sudden darkness envelloped them, which was only rendered

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more palpable by the frequent flashes of liquid fire, which seemed to surround them every moment; while, to complete their horror, they were continually alarmed by the roaring of wild beasts, which they distinguished during the intervals of the dreadful claps of thunder.—Drenched with rain, and encompassed with peril, the fortitude of the Princess began to decline, and she leaned fearfully on the arm of Alexis:—she trembled, her limbs lost their strength; and, as he sustained her sinking frame, a lengthened vivid flash discovered to his sight her fainting pale features.—In this extremity, the Prince cast his eyes round in despair, when he thought he saw a glimmering light at no great distance;—snatching the Princess in his arms, he instantly made his way towards it; and, after frequently losing sight of it, and then bursting again upon his view, he arrived at length at the door of a small hut, just at which moment the

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Princess began to revive:—her exhausted hopes were cheered at the discovery, and Alexis knocked gently at the door, which was opened by an old man in a hermit's dress, who welcomed them in to his humble dwelling to take a temporary shelter from the pityless storm.—Their ancient host made no inquisitive observations, but entreated them to rest themselves there during the night, as they were far from any habitation, and he would guide their footsteps into a path at the dawn of day, that would lead them out of the wood.

They took a short repose on the hermit's bed, but Zara's frame had undergone too much fatigue and fright, and she was seized with a sudden illness, which prevented their setting forward the next day. Meanwhile, Alexis informed the hermit that he was travelling towards the valley of *Islam*, which lay upon the western borders of the kingdom of *Hira*; that he had missed

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his way in the forest, and related the manner of losing their horses.—The hermit expressed his astonishment that he should have undertaken so long and dangerous a journey, accompanied with only a single page,—as the forest was not only much infested with wild beasts, but subject to the frequent inroads of the Arabs, who hunted in the same for their diversion; but he promised to put them in a road, the least liable to expose them to the dangers he had described, and by which, in a few days, he hoped they might reach the valley of *Islam*.—But Zara's fever increased, which did not promise much hope of a speedy departure.

The hermit attended with anxious care the distemper of the supposed page; and Alexis, seeing little prospect of pursuing their journey for some days, and fearful of reducing the stock of provisions of the friendly hermit, he inquired if he could furnish him with a Persian bow, and he would

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go and hunt in the forest to augment their fare.

The old man opened a closet, and presented him with a bow and quiver; and, as he placed them in the hands of the Prince, tears trickled down his aged cheeks, and he appeared most sensibly affected.

Surprised at his grief, Alexis inquired the cause of his being so moved;—while the hermit replied, pressing his hand with fervour:—"Go! and pursue your amusement; and, at your return, I will endeavour to regain that composure which this circumstance has tended to break, and will relate to you a tale of grief, the impression of which, time and contemplation have in vain endeavoured to efface!"

Alexis departed, and penetrated into the thickest of the forest; while Zara, the pretended page, was attended by the hermit with the tenderest care.—Evening approached, and Alexis re-

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turned with the body of a large stag which he had slain;—and after this repast, the Princess being somewhat better, they seated themselves by their ancient host, who began his tale in the following manner:—

THE

HERMIT OF THE FOREST.

My father was a merchant of Bassora, and had a numerous family.—My brothers all followed the profession of arms, and served in the armies of the Sultans. I was the youngest, and was designed to succeed my father in his extensive business:—my sisters were all married except the eldest, who preferred a single life, and supplied the place of my mother, who had been some time dead; she took care of our mansion during the absence of my father, who used to accompany the caravans, which carried our mer-

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chandize across the Desert to Cairo, Bagdad, &c. The merchants travelling in these caravans were always armed, to defend themselves against the roving Arabs, who frequently attempted to plunder them. — The bow and quiver which I presented to you yesterday was one of his; and the recollection of his untimely and miserable fate drew forth involuntary tears; —and brought also to my mind the happiness of my early days, and the bitter remembrance of my subsequent misfortunes.

During my father's last journey with one of these caravans, in which was embarked the chief amount of our wealth in merchandize, while in the midst of the Desert, they were overtaken by one of those calamities, which it is impossible to foresee, or, foreseeing, impossible to prevent;—I mean the dreadful moving mountains of burning sand, which, stirred up by a violent and irresistible wind, col-

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leeting as it advances, darkens the air for several leagues round, and, finally falling, overwhelms every thing in its way.—The merchants and their attendants, which accompanied the caravan, amounted to nearly 12,000 souls, besides a numerous body of camels, mules, &c. — and goods to an immense value.—All were overwhelmed in one promiscuous ruin.—Flight at that awful moment is unavailing, — the gathering mountain, stretching as wide as the eye can reach, and swift as the wind by which it is borne along, encompasses with certain death the pedestrian traveller, or he who is mounted on the swiftest camel or Arabian steed.—This dreadful visitation also happened in the night, the time which is generally used by the travellers in crossing the deserts, to avoid the heat of the burning sun-beams.—The lengthened line of the procession of so vast a body of people happily afforded an opportuni-

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ty for a few slaves in the rear to save themselves, and who arrived at Bassora to tell the dreadful tale!—Not a vestige was to be seen remaining of so vast a host, nor even was the tract they had taken to be afterwards discerned.—My sister, whose affection for her father was very great, did not long survive his loss; she soon after sickened and died, and I alone remained of all our once numerous family in the city of Bassora.—I collected together the remnant of my father's effects, and still found myself above penury and want;—and in a few years, (ah! woeful recollection!) I united myself to a female slave, who had been a chief favorite of my late sister, and for whom I had conceived a fatal prepossession. I raised her from a slave to freedom; from bondage, ignominy, and disgrace, to liberty, honor, and love;—in fine, I gave her my heart, my soul, my all,—for I doated on her;—and she returned me only dissimulation for

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affection, infamy and treachery for honor and plighted faith, and insult and cruelty for tenderness and love! Ah! ill-fated *Felice*, how happy might you have lived, how divinely blessed had been your faithful and too generous Ibrahim, had you been grateful instead of perfidious,—had you been virtuous and deserving as you were base, vicious, and abandoned!—But peace to thy shade!—thy cruel death be thy only punishment, and atone for thy wickedness and immorality! — For some time I lived in happiness and ease;—with sufficient wealth and the possession of beauty and love, I enjoyed a blissful life;—till the clouds of adverse fortune emptied their store of ills upon my devoted head!—I speak not of any failure in my pecuniary resources,—but fate ordained it so, that I should one day meet with a young merchant, the son of a distant branch of my father's family; we had known each other in our infancy, and I welcomed

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him to my house, and insisted on his taking up his abode with me during his stay in Bassora.

The merchandize which he had brought to our city not meeting with a ready market, his stay was necessarily protracted for some considerable time; while, to render the disappointment occasioned by this delay less vexations, and his hours less irksome, I strove to engage his mind in divers schemes of pleasure and amusement. One day we hunted;—on another we perambulated the beautiful city of Bassora, examining the curiosities of art and nature contained in it;—or spent our hours at home, enlivened by the sprightly dance, or listening to the enchanting strains of the minstrel.—At length a caravan arrived, which brought with it some valuable commodities consigned to my care, and my time became consequently much employed abroad. — Amrou (which was the traitor's name) for

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some days attended me during the time I was employed in executing my commission; but at last he feigned indisposition, and remained at home. In consequence of his appearing unable to prosecute the termination of his own affairs, or attend me in the progress of mine, I cheerfully undertook to busy myself in his concerns, and this double employment often caused me to be absent from my adored Felice during the whole day. — Time rolled on in this manner; nor did my heart suspect the least design in Amrou to destroy the happiness he saw me enjoy, and which was so constantly the theme of his praise and admiration; nor did I harbour the most distant notion that my wife, the joy of my existence, the object of my unceasing affection, and the living monument of my favor and generosity, was about to become the murderer of my happiness, the betrayer of my

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love, and the faithless guardian of *my* honor and *her* duty."

[Alexis, whose mind did not exactly sympathize with the visible emotions of grief which the good Hermit testified during the recital of his hapless story, was desirous to put a stop to the farther communication; and interrupted Ibrahim with some trifling questions relative to the first part of his history, namely, the moving sands of the Desert; and wished to be informed if those dreadful calamities happened frequently:]

"Yes; (answered Ibrahim) and the description given of them by travellers is truly wonderful.—I remember my father, on his return from a journey to Alexandria, gave us an account of one of these awful movements, which he and his party had seen, but which happily passed in a different direction from their caravan.—Though I was then a child, the recital made a deep impression on my youthful fancy, which years could not efface, and

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which the untimely fate of my father has fixed indelibly in my mind.—"It was one evening, (said he,) about the 20th day of our entrance into the desert, whilst the sun was yet high in the heavens, when we were greatly alarmed at a prodigy inconceivably grand.—A keen wind had suddenly sprung up, and, blowing briskly, carried columns of sand between us and the sun; which being tinged with its rays, and in some places, as it were, transparent, shewed like an immense wall of fire floating through the air.—The interstices, through which the sun shone, added to the awful magnificence of the scene; the flames appearing to burst and sparkle from prodigious piles of red hot sand.—The Arabs, our guides, well-acquainted with the danger which encompassed us, prostrated themselves, overwhelmed with fear and apprehension; while the merchants stood lost, as it were, in awe and admiration at the sight of this sublime object, which

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continued to pass before us, and which, had it approached, would in a moment have buried us in its fiery boson. — A solemn silence reigned, while we contemplated the terrible beauty and majesty of the phenomenon.—Some particles of the drifted sand came near us, which occasioned us to discover that the flying body was of partial thickness, hurled in confusion, or rather spread between us and the sun like a mist. — This first appearance was quickly changed by the increase of the wind; which, raising the sand in chaotic wildness, suddenly took the form of mountains, and every awful figure which fancy could trace; appearing like a vast continent of glowing fire, stretching as far as the eye could reach.—In this fearful suspense of being swallowed up every moment, we remained for some hours; during which time, the heat was so intense as almost to singe our hair, actually parched and cracked our flesh, increased

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in a four-fold proportion our ardent thirst, and dried up a great part of our water in the skins on the backs of our camels.—Fortunately, the wind blew constantly in the same direction, and finally died away, when we once more pursued our route in peace!"—— Would that Heaven, (added the Hermit,) had permitted him to escape from the like danger in his last journey!

The Princess, whose curiosity had been hitherto much excited by the relation of the Hermit's tale of his wife's infidelity, and at the same time eager to learn the catastrophe, which he had already hinted as having proved so fatal, urged him to proceed in his own narrative, which had so commanded their attention, and the good old man therefore resumed his tale:—

"Confidence and love (as I before observed) kept me from suspicion; and that want of suspicion hindered my observing the behaviour of my wife towards my young guest; or at

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least prevented my interpreting her attentions towards him to any other cause than civility, and a ready compliance to my wishes.

By constant application, and indefatigable perseverance, I at length succeeded in perfecting the business which had brought Amrou to our city; and in a few days he purposed to depart. The time was, however, still protracted, both on account of his affected indisposition and my unwillingness to part with the playmate of my childish days and my unexpected renewed acquaintance. My own business still occasioned my absence from home, which I generally quitted early in the morning, not returning till the afternoon to partake of the conversation of my friend and my adored Felice. One day, as I was returning from the market-place, I was accosted by a merchant of the city, who, discoursing on affairs of business, brought me to his own house, and detained me till the

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evening. As I was directing my steps towards home, I was suddenly attacked by three slaves, one of whom wounded me in the back with a dagger, while another struck me on the head with a club; — fortunately I wrested the club from the villain before he could repeat his blow, and stretched one of the ruffians at my feet; the other two cowards immediately fled!—I called aloud for help, and some people arriving on the spot, they raised the prostrate slave, but he was without any signs of life,—the blow and fall had beat in his skull, and his death prevented my discovering then the author of the atrocious attempt upon my life! — When I arrived at my own house, my wife and friend seemed greatly alarmed at the danger which I had escaped, and were loud in their execrations against the perpetrators of such a daring and wicked outrage. The wound I had received was deep and dangerous—a

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fever ensued—and my friend, whose health seemed to be renewed as mine decreased, voluntarily put off his intended return, under the idea, as he professed, to assist my wife in her attention and care of me during my illness.—Notwithstanding the opinion of the surgeon and physician that it was doubtful whether I could survive, yet in a short time some favourable symptoms appeared,—the fever abated,—and my strength rapidly returned.—Meanwhile Amrou had undertaken the task to endeavour to discover the retreat of the two slaves who had escaped,—and a reward was cried through the streets of Bassora, at his suggestion, to facilitate the discovery. But the whole remained a perfect mystery. I was then sufficiently recovered to leave my bed, and take the air of my garden; and returning health brought with it the renewed comforts of my life. I entertained a higher opinion than ever of my friend's

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apparent attachment in refusing to leave me during my illness; and the assiduous attentions of my beautiful Felice made life the more desirable.

One evening, feeling myself somewhat fatigued with exerting my spirits during the day, I desired my wife to make some nourishing food, and signified that I wished to retire early to rest. I had not long been laid down before I was seized with the most excruciating pains. In a moment I lay writhing in the utmost torments, and unable even to call for assistance. Shortly afterwards my senses forsook me, nor can I recollect any thing from that moment till Heaven restored me to my reason!—To reason, did I say!—Oh, no!—to distraction, horror, and despair, worse than death!—To torture, grief, and wretchedness!—To the knowledge of injuries, which stung me worse than a thousand tortures!—To the loss of all I held dear—of all for which I wished to live

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—of every comfort which could make life desirable!—I awoke at last as from a dream. By my bedside sat an old and faithful domestic, whose transports were unbounded at the prospect of my recovery;—but her countenance soon changed from joy to the appearance of inexpressible sorrow when I inquired for my beloved Felice—she covered her face with her hands and remained mute.—"Tell me, (said I hastily,) where is my wife—my friend—lead them to me, that they may partake of the pleasure of my return from death, as it were, to life—from the brink of the grave to enjoy once more their endearing society!"—A deep groan, which shook her whole frame, overwhelmed me with terror——"What! demanded I, has the appearance of my danger been fatal to my tender wife?"—She appeared more and more agitated, but answered me only with sighs and tears!—"Gracious Heaven! I ex-

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claimed, why do you torture me thus?—Pronounce the fatal word—she is dead—she is gone!"—At these last words she gave a convulsive shriek and fell senseless on the floor! —I remained for some moments in anxious suspense, when the noise of her fall brought another of my faithful servants into the room;—and, raising myself from my bed, I again impatiently demanded the reason of the silence and horror which prevailed around;—but how shall I describe my emotions!—how shall I convey the impression of the feelings I experienced when the slave informed me—(himself petrified with grief, and his voice rendered almost inarticulate with continual sobs)—that my wife—my adored Felice—the partner of my joy and hope—the never-ceasing object of my affection,—was gone they knew not whither!—that very morning she had departed early, accompanied by the youth, my late guest!—She had dis-

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charged most of my servants the preceding day; and, not doubting of my dissolution being near, she had left only these two domestics to see me buried, and had for ever left the house, having first emptied my coffers, and carried off all her own valuables!

During this recital, I remained fixed in astonishment—my blood harrowed up—and my brain burning with surprise and horror.—At length I fell back on my pillow, and became again insensible.—I once more revived;—but my grief was suddenly changed to rage and the hopes of vengeance!—My anger and despair gave me fresh vigour—I ordered horses to be got ready immediately, and in spite of all remonstrance, I determined on pursuing the traitors.—Though weak, and altogether unfit for such an attempt, my soul was bent on vengeance—and the eager hopes of revenge supplied the want of strength. — There was but one road which they could

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take until they had made many days' journey; and as they had only departed that same morning, and were under no apprehension of a pursuit, as they believed me already, as it were, in the grave, I was not without hopes that we should overtake them.

Armed, and accompanied by my faithful slave, we mounted our horses, and flew towards the Desert. We travelled hard all the night, and early in the morning, the horse which my slave rode fell dead with fatigue. Some few hours before, we had passed some inhabitants of our town, who were on their return thither, and were stopping to take refreshment; of these we had inquired if they had met the parties we were in search of, but they had not;—I therefore desired my slave to hasten back to those travellers, and intreat them to supply him with another horse; and, finding also my own beast almost reduced to the same state, I entered a winding path, which led into

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the recesses of a mountain, and purposed there to wait his return.

At the bottom of some of the barren mountains, which lay scattered at a little distance from one another, a few leagues from Bassora, it had been the custom of the rich inhabitants of that town to erect their mausoleums; and the one at which I had halted was much used for that purpose; for, contrary to the usual appearance of these hills, which generally present to the view only a pile of parched earth, totally destitute of verdure, there was a small wood growing on one side, which extended the whole length of the hill, and afforded a shelter to the traveller from the mid-day heat.—Here I allowed my horse to nip the scanty grass, while I seated myself under the shade, impatiently waiting the slave's return.

On a sudden, I heard voices;—I rose, and traced the sound.—A female accent caught my listening ear—I flew

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towards the spot whence it proceeded —and beheld—my wife and her paramour!—Transported with rage, I drew my sabre — "Faithless, murderous, treacherous wretches!" I exclaimed; "an injured husband's vengeance has overtaken you—prepare to meet the reward of your baseness!"

I rushed on them, while they stood motionless with surprise—but, alas! in the moment when Heaven had appeared to grant me revenge for my wrongs, my strength failed me; a root of a tree, which, blinded by anger, I had not observed, lay in my path;—I stumbled over it, and fell with such force to the ground, as to lay stunned before them.

A plan of farther villany then entered into the minds of these abandoned wretches;—a scheme such as none but the most abandoned, dissolute, and wicked, monsters could have suggested.—I lay at their mercy;—all deception now was useless;—they

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had unmasked themselves; and, fortune having once more placed me in their power, they determined at once to end their fears of farther obstruction to their wishes by my death!——Already was the hand of Amrou raised to terminate my miserable existence, when I once more opened my eyes!—I saw his lifted arm, but I felt no dread!—Weary of my existence, and believing myself to be in the gripe of death through fatigue and mortification, I courted the blow, which would end all my sorrows at once, and free me from the sight of the hateful objects before me!—But a most dreadful thought entered the imagination of the fair traitoress, which nothing but a fiend-like heart could have inspired.

Oh! that such wicked, such cruel, passion should have inhabited that once tender bosom!—Some demon, surely, possessed her mind!—Your hearts would bleed to hear the recital of the misery I was made to endure by

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the suggestions of this imp of darkness! —They purposed to bind me to the branches of the surrounding trees, to witness their dalliance; and when they should have sufficiently tortured me, they intended so to have left me, and departed! —— My horse at that moment appearing in sight, "Behold! (said Amrou,) the provident Ibrahim has brought for our accommodation the means of facilitating our journey!" Disarmed and rendered feeble by my recent afflictions, and the fatigue I had undergone during so many hours without food or rest, I remained stretched upon the ground, nor could I resist the united efforts of these abandoned wretches, who, binding my arms and legs with the trappings of my horse, suspended my body from the branches of two trees. In vain I entreated them to end my sufferings at once, and complete their guilty projects; — in vain I implored them to remember my former kindnesses towards them,

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and in mercy give me that death I so ardently desired! — "No! (said the female fiend,) we have before endeavoured to prove to you how much we wished to rid you of the trouble of receiving any farther pleasure or pain in this world, but your obstinacy and love of life rejected our kindness: —the last *dose* which I administered was given in charity to send you to the tomb, but you have chosen to come hither to thank me in person for my kindness!"—"And if the cowardly fools had but done their duty, instead of leaving their work half finished, (cried the ungrateful youth,) you would, by *my* care and attention, have been spared the trouble of this journey to seek your own destruction at our hands!"—"Barbarous and unnatural wretches! (cried I,) cease to exult in the ruin you have made! — Are you not fearful that the judgement of Heaven will overtake you in your guilty career?—Relent while you have

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the opportunity ; return the property of which you have so unjustly deprived me, release me from the torture I endure, and go, unmolested, wheresoever you wish; but be assured an injured husband's prayers will, sooner or later, find an avenger even in your own guilty bosoms ; and you, in your turn, will be brought to endure pangs as severe as you now inflict on me !"—This and much more I uttered, in the hope either to exasperate them at once to end my misery, or to delay the time till the return of my slave, whom I anxiously expected. Meanwhile they continued their repast, which my sudden appearance had interrupted, and did not cease to revile me, and use the most disgusting language to wound my feelings and augment my despair. — Nearly intoxicated with wine, they rose and danced beneath me, using the vilest epithets ; while my wife, with the gestures of a fury, during her dancing,

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occasionally advanced holding my sabre to my throat, or threatening to tear open my bowels and display them reeking on its blade. Still they delayed, however, their last act of vengeance, and, tired with their exertions, they stretched themselves on the grass, and soon afterwards fell asleep.

A dawn of hope now rushed upon my mind:—my slave would return, I doubted not, before they waked, and surprise them. Each moment seemed an age of misery, and I listened with eager anxiety in hopes of hearing the welcome approach of succour and relief. I checked my involuntary groans that I might not disturb the wretches' slumbers; and a secret impulse warned my aching heart that the triumph of virtue and unmerited sufferings over guilt, treachery, and intended murder, was nigh at hand. — While my mind was thus cheered with an inward presentiment, and my body and limbs were tortured by the situation in which

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their cruelty had placed me, on a sudden the leaves of the tree above my head became greatly agitated:—I lifted up my eyes and discovered that what hitherto I had considered a part of one of the trees to which I was tied, was in fact an immense serpent, who had been sheltering himself from the heat of the scorching sun among the leaves.—My blood ran cold at the sight; and, as the reptile glided through the branches towards me, my terrors increased! — He approached my suspended body, and I already felt the weight of the enormous animal.—I should have cried aloud, but fear had totally deprived me of utterance. He darted his head towards the ground, while the extremity of his lengthened body was twisted round mine.—How shall I describe my emotions at feeling the pressure of the panting reptile, and beholding his frightful glaring eyes and forked tongue below me, waving about, as

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if in search of something to cling to! At length it disengaged itself from me, fell to the ground, and crept along the grass.—I shuddered while I beheld it approach the sleeping pair. The half-drained cup first presented itself to his view: he dipped his fiery tongue in the wine, but the taste of the liquor making him sick, he vomited it back, and filled up the vacuum with his poisonous saliva:—he then passed by my wife and crept over the body of Amrou, who, starting in his sleep at the unusual pressure, just as the animal had reached his head, he laid his hand upon the serpent's back; the reptile, finding himself disturbed in his progress, seized the unhappy youth by the throat, who gave only one convulsive groan and instantly expired: the serpent then pursued its way along the grass and was quickly out of my sight. The last struggle of the dying Amrou waked my wife; scarcely opening her drowsy eyes, but finding herself

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thirsty, from the effects of the wine she had drunk, she stretched out her hand to the fatal cup, drank off the contents, and again laid herself down. —Notwithstanding the pain of the sufferings I was then enduring, and the idea of those I had so lately undergone, from the infidelity and treachery of this guilty woman, I remained petrified with horror at the knowledge of the dreadful pangs which awaited her, and my heart bled at the thoughts of her fatal destiny.—A few moments had scarcely elapsed before her whole frame became convulsed—she started from the ground—she seized the hand of her paramour, and found it cold and lifeless—she fixed her eyes upon his blood-stained neck and shrieked aloud —her pangs increased—her lips began to foam—and I dreaded lest her revengeful mind should inspire her to rush towards me and satisfy her revenge before she died;—nor can I account for her not reeking her fury on me

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while I was thus at her mercy, unless her bewildered fancy had conjectured that it was I who had slain her lover and departed ;—or rather I am inclined to suppose that the poisonous draught had already deprived her of all recollection, and that almost instantaneous madness had assaulted her brain.—I shuddered at, pitied, and commiserated, her pangs:—one moment she tore her hair and beat her breasts—then she writhed upon the ground, and scratched the earth up with her nails, as if to find a relief from her sufferings in a living grave—again she started up, ran wildly for a short distance, and returned running round the dead body, and howling most piteously—then fell by its side, beat her head against the ground, and lay a few moments convulsed in agonies too dreadful to be described!—She raised herself once more, and with her infuriated hands tore off her clothes, and lacerated her flesh with her nails—her glaring eye-

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balls now caught sight of the naked sabre which lay on the grass—she snatched it up and plunged it in her body, and, as she sunk down upon the earth, tore out her bleeding bowels with her hands!—Thus perished in my sight the wicked authors of my disgrace; but, though my wrongs had been great, the sufferings which my once adored and beloved Felice had endured obliterated every idea of my own injuries, and I freely forgave her departing spirit, while I would gladly have alleviated the pangs of her cruel death.—Her mangled body had scarcely ceased to move, when I heard the voice of my slave, who had discovered my horse straying without his trappings, and was apprehensive that I had met with some accident.—He soon released me from my painful condition, and we contemplated with inexpressible horror the dead bodies of the ill-fated pair.—We made a grave near the spot, and deposited therein the man-

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gled remains of the once beautiful and lovely Felice, and the ungrateful and treacherous Amrou. — We then returned to Bassora, and shortly afterwards I caused a monument to be erected over their remains, as a token of my former affection and respect for a once lovely wife and youthful friend, till the indulgence of an unruly and illicit passion corrupted their hearts, and converted them into my bitterest enemies; and also at the same time to serve as a remembrance of the wrath of Heaven, which will not suffer the wicked to triumph long in their guilt! —Finding that my life became painful to me while living on the spot where I had so recently enjoyed such felicity, and that every trifling circumstance contributed hourly to bring to my recollection the sufferings which I had so lately undergone, I determined to quit Bassora for ever.—I therefore disposed of my effects, and caused the produce to be conveyed to my brothers, who

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were serving the Sultan, with an account of the reason for my secluding myself from society; and, with a small reserve for my own support, I wandered to this spot, where I built this hut, and have resided here now many years.—The Arabs, who hunt in these parts, at first were tempted to rob me of the little comforts I enjoyed, but their leaders have commanded them to respect me, and it is now even from their aid chiefly that I derive my support, as they often leave me part of the game which they have killed: at other times, I supply my wants from the shepherds of the Valley of Islam, which lies about two days' journey from this forest, and to which place, you say, you are about to go."

Alexis felt himself much relieved from embarrassment when the Hermit's Tale was concluded, and forbore to make any observations on the fatal catastrophe for obvious reasons; but the mind of the mock page was deeply

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stricken with the similarity of guilt which appeared in the conduct of the ungrateful Felice and herself.—She, however, confined her reflections within her own breast; and, believing that her indisposition had in some measure subsided, she proposed to Alexis to set forward on their journey the next morning.—The period of the Hermit's usual visit to the Valley being now approaching, he proffered to accompany them to the place of their destination, as he could thereby serve them as a guide.—This offer was readily accepted, and on the following morning they departed from the hermitage.—They travelled slowly; for, the Princess soon found her fever increasing, and it was not till the evening of the third day that they reached the Valley.—The Hermit conducted them to a shepherd's cottage, where they were kindly received, and Zara once more found a resting-place from fatigue.

The restless mind of Alexis was,

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however, soon weary of this life of inactivity; and, as the Princess still continued indisposed, he told her his determination of venturing to return to the City of Hira in disguise, to search out if possible, the cause of his disgrace; for, he was not without apprehension that the implacable resentment of the King might induce him to adopt another successor to the crown, to the total exclusion of his hopes and his daughter's claims, who had likewise fallen under his displeasure.—Zara, who possessed a deep penetrating mind, thought she discovered in this proposed journey a manifest inclination to desert her, that he might return to the arms of her sister, and make his peace for ever with the King;—but, at the same time, being sufficiently acquainted with the ungovernable disposition of Alexis, whose obstinacy always seemed to increase in proportion as it met with resistance, wisely acquiesced in the plan; for, she rea-

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soned with herself, that, if she recovered from her present sickness, she could follow him; and, if he should prove successful in obtaining the object of his ambition, namely, the Throne of Hira, she did not doubt but that her charms would at all times have sufficient influence over his mind to induce him to share his prosperity with her, in exclusion of the Princess, his wife:—and, on the other hand, should her life be drawing to a close, she felt herself still too much interested in his future welfare to be the cause of retaining him in that seclusion, which might be the means of frustrating every hope of his future greatness.—Being furnished therefore with an Arab's dress, and otherwise disguising his person so as to preclude the possibility of discovery, he received from Zara a portion of the wealth of her late murdered husband, and forthwith set out upon his journey; but Zara had first exacted from him a solemn promise, that if

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fortune promoted his views, she should be admitted to partake of his happiness; and that, if no prospect of reconciliation appeared likely to happen, he should return and live in peace with her in the Valley of Islam.—Alexis therefore departed, pursuing the road pointed out by the hospitable shepherds, and quickly passed the mountains which skirted the borders of the dominions of Maximin.—Towards the middle of the second day, after crossing a dreary plain, tired and parched with thirst, occasioned by the intense heat of the noon-day sun, he was overtaken by a Persian and his two slaves, riding on camels.—The Persian, seeing a lonely traveller oppressed with fatigue, offered to assist him in his journey, by letting him ride one of the camels on which his slave was mounted.—The offer was thankfully accepted by the Prince, whose benevolent companion informed him that he was on his way through the

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Kingdom of Hira to Susa, having been into Ionia to vend some merchandize. —That he had a brother in the town of Hira, at whose house he purposed to stay a few days.—In return for this communication, Alexis told the merchant that his name was Aladin, and that he was also going to Hira to claim some property left him by a deceased friend.—As they drew near the city, the mind of the Prince was occupied in reflections upon the vicissitudes of life, which now subjected him to revisit the place of his early fame and fortunes under the disguise of a wandering Arab.—He was roused from these gloomy thoughts by the merchant stopping at the door of an elegant mansion, and bidding one of the slaves announce the arrival of Noureddin Asher.—The traveller with his companion were kindly received, and the false Aladin was importuned to take up his abode with Noureddin's brother till he should have concluded the bu-

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siness which brought him to that place. —Ali Asher was a merchant of consequence, and in conversation Alexis learnt that he had a son who was a soldier in the King's Guards; and the Prince was not a little surprised to hear Ali giving an account to his brother of the near prospect which his son once had of receiving a very great reward from the King, for apprehending the Prince Alexis, just as he was on the point of crossing the borders of the kingdom in his flight into Persia, and the great disappointment which the most unaccountable escape of the Prince had occasioned. —It gave no small satisfaction to Alexis to find that this young soldier, whose eye might have penetrated through his disguise, was then with the King and the army on the frontiers.—In the society of these merchants it was not long before he became acquainted with the true state of affairs; for, Noureddin was at every opportunity soliciting his

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brother to relate whatever he knew, both in regard to the Government, as well as concerning the wonderful adventures of the Prince Alexis.—Still the real cause of the displeasure of the King, and the consequent disgrace of the Prince and Princess, remained involved in mystery; and Alexis, ever on his guard, avoided always the appearance of too great a curiosity.—Ali Asher, as before remarked, was rich; but he possessed one treasure which he prized above all his wealth—his happiness appeared wholly centred in his beautiful daughter; who, since her mother's death, though still very young, superintended all the domestic concerns of his house.—*Irene* was 17 years of age, of a most engaging figure, and a countenance expressive of tenderness and sensibility.—Many noble youths solicited her hand, but she had hitherto rejected all offers of marriage; yet there was one person among the train of her suitors, whom she most

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distinguished, and for whose sake she had lately dismissed his rivals.—Her father also had approved of the union, and some temporary circumstances alone delayed their marriage.—Notwithstanding the goading sting of conscience frequently intruded itself into the guilty bosom of Alexis—notwithstanding the recollection of the murderous scene in the garden of the generous but ill-fated Conradin, or the dread excited occasionally in his mind of one day experiencing a punishment as awful as that which befel the guilty wretches set forth in the History of the Hermit of the Forest;—in despite of the retrospect of the terrible effects of his ungovernable passions, Alexis dared to look on the lovely and and virtuous Irene with a lustful eye; and his demon-like heart quickly resolved to gratify his wishes, though at the expense of the everlasting happiness of his friendly host and his innocent child.—The frequent calls of

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business which engaged the two merchants afforded many opportunities for him to declare his love; but the unsuspicious Irene at first considered his advances as proffered only in jest; for she knew him to be acquainted with her intention of a speedy marriage with the youthful Selim, and therefore regarded his behaviour merely as the sportive effusions arising from their friendly intimacy.—But the passion of Alexis increased, and the playful rebukes of Irene served only to fan the flame which raged in his breast.

One day, while the two merchants were abroad, and she was enjoying the refreshing breeze in the garden, Alexis joined her, and renewed the declaration of his love. — At first she rallied him as usual upon such discourse; but, finding that he still persisted in his endeavours to engage her affection, she became serious, and begged him to urge her no more upon such a theme, as her hand and heart

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were irrevokably engaged. But she unhappily knew not the disposition of Alexis, or she would without delay have frustrated for ever his design, by acquainting her father with the tenor of his behaviour. He was not to be deterred from his purpose by this repulse; his wicked mind was already determined as to what course he should pursue upon her expected refusal; but his bold spirit for a moment shrunk before the frown of insulted innocence; and, though he had even attempted to take advantage of their being alone by offering some trifling violences to her modesty, yet he suffered her in the end to break from him, and she retired to her chamber. His courage returned—he followed—but the lucky return of Ali and his brother prevented just at that time any mischief resulting from his ungovernable desires. Had Irene followed the dictates of prudence, she would have revealed the improper conduct of

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Alexis to her father, and have effected his immediate removal from the house; but timidity and hospitality on the one hand, and on the other a forgiving disposition, accompanied with a hope that so frank an avowal of her determination would for ever confound his expectations, prompted her to a fatal concealment;—but, in order to strengthen the avowal of her resolution in the mind of the stranger, she took an opportunity, while he was present, to fix the day on which she was to give her hand to Selim. She was rejoiced to find that he now ceased his importunities, and she congratulated herself upon the disappearance of that uneasiness in her mind, which had been caused through his addresses; — but the harmless and lovely girl saw not the storm which was gathering to burst with double force on her head. Alexis had been silent, but it was only while he was brooding over the means to accomplish his horrid design.—

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Meanwhile the happy hour was rapidly approaching which was to secure her, she trusted, from the machinations of her tormentor. — Irene was alone in her chamber—her father and uncle were abroad employed in their usual avocations — a heavy presage hung upon her heart for which she could not account — an involuntary sigh helped to lighten the weight upon her spirits — she turned her eyes towards the door, and beheld the stranger advancing towards her. — She started, but was unable to speak. In a mild voice he bade her not to be alarmed, for that he came only to make his last appeal ;—that upon a denial and solemn rejection of his suit, he intended to quit her father's house immediately, as he could not possibly endure the sight of her being wedded to another. In a solemn accent, she therefore once more repeated her fixed determination to wed Selim, and desired that he would for ever cease to

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urge a suit, which would only produce disappointment to him, tend to harass her mind, and disturb the happiness of her father and her friends. "It is, perhaps, (said the Prince,) from a persuasion of my low birth, arising from my present appearance, which induces you to prefer this youth; but know, beautiful Irene, that he, who kneels at your feet and supplicates your love, is in rank far above the object of your present affections; it is my fate to remain in this situation for a time; but, if my adored Irene will consent to return my love, I will unfold to her the reason of my present appearance; and quickly convince her of my ability to advance her to the possession of luxuries and honors!"—Saying this, he drew from beneath his robe some jewels of great value given him by Zara, which he produced as a proof of his assertion. "Aladin, (replied Irene,) you much mistake my disposition if you imagine that my af-

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fections can be biassed, or my vanity ensnared, by the allurements of riches or splendor; and, though it may have been necessary for you to have assumed a disguise and impose upon the credulity of those who are willing to receive you, it has never been my habit to practise deception, and therefore must again assure you that my resolution remains in full force, notwithstanding your present declaration, which I own has greatly excited my surprize. My heart is Selim's, nor will the prospect of pomp or grandeur, no, nor the offer of a crown, alter my fixed resolve!"—"Beautiful Irene, (replied the Prince,) although surrounded on all sides by innumerable perils, I can no longer resist the inclination to declare my real name; as much from the necessity of disclaiming any design of practising a criminal deceit upon your father's generosity and hospitality, as under the hope, that,

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when you are acquainted with the true quality of your enraptured admirer, you will then pity his condition and reward his love." — "You may spare yourself the task of revealing your secret to me (replied Irene); for, as the discovery would not cause my resolution to waver, or alter my intentions towards Selim, it would be a needless sacrifice, and tend only to burthen me with a secret which I have no inclination to possess, and subject you to the danger of a premature discovery; therefore, once again I entreat you to leave me, and mention this hateful subject no more." — "Cruel maid! (cried the Prince,) you know not what you refuse; the offer of a throne, which you have affected to despise, it is in my power probably to make!—Relinquish this attachment to an object of humble birth, embrace the offer of my love, and here I vow you shall share with me that Throne which is already within

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my grasp!"—Amazed at his words, and alarmed at his impassioned behaviour, she began seriously to apprehend that he was in a frenzied state of mind; and, impressed with this notion, she endeavoured to pass by him, and retire from the threatened danger; but Alexis was too far advanced in his career of villany to suffer her to escape, and, seizing her hand,—"Stay, beautiful Irene, (said he,) and persist not in this disdainful usage: to convince you of my sincerity and the ardour of my love, I will at once commit myself to your mercy, and, by this reliance on your honour, convince you of my attachment:—Behold! (continued he, throwing off his disguise,) behold the Prince Alexis! the persecuted wandering Alexis! who, after so many wonderful escapes, has ventured again to enter this city, and who will shortly publicly proclaim himself, and demand the restoration of those rights of which he has been

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so unjustly deprived.—Already have I engaged a host of secret friends, who, on a signal, will assist to dethrone the Tyrant, and I shall obtain the Crown as a just reward for all my sufferings! Consent, therefore, to bless me with your love, and share with me the Throne of Hira!"——"Urge me no farther (returned Irene) to break that vow which I have so voluntarily entered into, and which my heart so truly approves; and let my conduct convince you of my disinterested motives and pure affection for my affianced lover, in thus persisting in my unalterable determination to be the wife of Selim; and believe me, my Lord, when I firmly declare, that were you even in actual possession of the dignity which you anticipate, and possessed of all its attendant power and advantages, still would the humble Irene decline your proffered honours, and remain ever faithful to the choice she has already made."——

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"Obdurate maid!" cried the impassioned Prince, "why will you thus torture the heart which adores you, and trample with scorn upon the soul which exists but in your smiles?"——"My Lord, (replied Irene,) I must not stay to hear your unavailing complaints and fruitless protestations.—Are you not already the husband of the unfortunate Princess Orsinda, whose sufferings for your sake have been equal, I doubt not, to those which you have borne; and who, though released from the dungeon where she was first confined, is still a close prisoner in the Palace of Zurbad. Haste then, my Lord, fly to the relief and comfort of one who is so justly entitled to your regard, and seek no longer to interrupt my repose, who never can nor will listen to your proposals!"——With these words, she hastened towards the door of the chamber; but Alexis, recovering from the embarrassment into which the conclu-

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sion of her speech had thrown him, and instigated by the force of his licentious passion, determined to avail himself of the present moment to accomplish his wishes, and then leave the victim of his revenge to repent of the firmness of her resolves, and the scorn with which she had treated him. He therefore rushed after the trembling Irene, who had just opened the door of her chamber; she had reached the end of the gallery, but a sudden fear had overcome her spirits. Alexis overtook her at the head of the stairs — he caught her in his arms — "Release me!" cried the trembling maid. "What means this violence! Is this a proof of your boasted affection?"— "Adored Angel! (whispered the Prince,) I would die to prove the force of my love! Return and hear me once more pour out my soul at your feet!" —"Never!" cried she: — and, by a sudden spring, she disengaged herself from his grasp; but, at the mo-

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ment she imagined herself free and about to fly down the stairs, her foot became entangled in the loosened robe of the Prince, and uttering a piercing shriek she fell to the bottom and her head was dashed with dreadful force against one of the marble pillars of the hall!—Horror seized the bosom of the Prince as he viewed the senseless form of the ill-fated Irene.—Those features, which but a few moments before had kindled such raging passions in his breast, lay now before him weltering in gore, and crushed together in hideous confusion.—She gave no signs of life; but the sound of footsteps approaching roused the Prince from the stupor occasioned by the contemplation of the ghastly spectacle, and he hastened to his own apartment, where, snatching up his sabre, and resuming his disguise, he hurried through the garden-gate, nor stopped till he had reached the suburbs of the City.

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Here he supplied himself with a horse; and bent his way towards the camp, although he was yet unresolved in his mind what conduct he should next adopt.—He reached the army early in the evening of the following day, and inquired for Ali Kurzam, the captain of the King's guard, who had been one of the favourite companions of his youth.—He was conducted to his tent, and, having requested a private audience, with a feigned voice he informed the warrior that he brought news of the Prince Alexis.—"Where is the Prince?"—impatiently demanded Kurzam.—"Not far from here (replied Alexis); I come from him with a request to know if you are acquainted with the cause of his persecution, to which he himself (however strange it may appear) is a total stranger.—If you are still the friend of the Prince, you will testify your regard by granting the intelligence; if not, and you ap-

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prove of the tyranny exercised against him, or would wish to give him up to the wrath of the King, you will be still disappointed; for his resources are yet able to elude discovery."——"Stranger, (replied Kurzam,) my friendship for the Prince is still the same; but is he not at this moment in Persia, for so Maximin believes him to be, who conceives he has betrayed his secrets to the Persian King, and is likely to assist in dethroning him.—Haste, therefore, back to the Prince; and, if the King's suspicions are groundless, (which, by the circumstance of your mission, and his declaration of ignorance as to the cause of the King's anger, appears to me to be without doubt,) let him come without delay and justify himself.—Urge him to this measure instantly, for Maximin has some time ago received an accidental wound with a poisoned arrow; and, notwithstanding every effort has been exerted which the united skill of

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the ablest physicians could produce, his life is still considered to be in great danger, and the presence of the Prince at such a crisis will be of the utmost consequence to his future prosperity." "And was that the only charge against Alexis? (said the stranger;) and did the blind fury of Maximin pursue the Prince with such inveterate rancour, upon the supposition only of such an offence, without deigning to hear him, or suffering him to face his accusers? He will then no longer strive to elude his search, but appear at once and justify his fame! — Behold me ready to answer for myself!" —— "My Friend! my Prince! — (exclaimed the astonished Kurzam, as he contemplated the acknowledged features of Alexis:)—I do indeed rejoice in this discovery.—Let us repair without delay into the Royal Presence!" —— They hastened through the camp, and approached the Guards; — Kurzam gave the watch-word, and passed on

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to the entrance of the King's tent.—"I will enter first, (said Kurzam,) and announce your arrival, at the same moment that I will proclaim your innocence!"—He returned in a few moments.—"The King, (said he,) who has been in continual pain all day, from the effects of the operations which have been made upon his wound, has just now fallen asleep, and his Physicians will not suffer him to be disturbed; therefore, return with me to my tent.—I have desired a messenger to be sent to me as soon as he shall awake."——Towards morning, they were summoned to attend the King.—Alexis entered the tent with a firm step, but was struck with the faded form of the once gigantic Maximin.—Worn down with pain and sickness, he no longer displayed the noble grandeur and majestic mien, which had formerly so eminently distinguished him: his wound had begun to shew signs of mortification, although he

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had submitted to repeated operations to eradicate the poisonous infection.—He beheld the Prince with a mixture of distrust and astonishment, but listened to his attestation of innocence with apparent of pleasure. "But, (said he, in a feeble voice,) though you may be able to exculpate yourself from the treason with which you were first accused, how will you clear your conduct with respect to the murder of Conradin, and the dishonor of his wife, my eldest daughter? Conradin's brother conveyed this intelligence to me, and is thirsting for revenge. But retire for the present, (added he,) and hereafter I will hear your defence."—Alexis felt confused:—he was not prepared for this charge, and gladly retired to his friend, who left him alone in his tent at his particular request. — Meantime the news of the Prince's arrival spread quickly through the camp, and the troops loudly expressed their joy at his return;

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for, as yet the soldiers knew nothing of his crimes, they only remembered his gallant conduct in the field. — He was persuaded at length to shew himself to the army, who hailed with enthusiasm the re-appearance of their long-lost Chief. Night again came on, and no commands had been received from the King; but the physicians had reported that he was much better, and that they did not yet despair of his recovery. This intelligence did not by any means suit the wishes of the Prince; he looked forward with impatience to the dissolution of Maximin, as the moment to stifle all inquiry and exposition, as well as to afford him possession of the Crown, which was the object of his ambition. — It was now midnight, — the gloomy mind of the Prince became agitated by reflection on recent occurrences. His thoughts reverted to the situation of the Princess his wife; — this idea brought before his view the

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guilty attachment of her sister Zara, and then the murder of the good Conradin struck his conscience; — the image also of the mild and lovely Mariana haunted his imagination and convulsed his breast;—the impression likewise which the Hermit of the Forest left upon his mind could never be effaced;—and lastly the mangled spectacle of the innocent and beautiful Irene harrowed up his soul, and destroyed every hope of repose.—He rose from his couch—the camp was wrapt in silence—not a sound was heard, except the distant footsteps of the watchful sentries.—A secret horror seemed to steal over his senses—he paced the tent with disordered steps—the heat of the night had induced him to throw off most of his garments, and he was unarmed and nearly naked. — A rustling noise engaged his attention — he turned towards the door, which was suddenly burst open, and a figure muffled in a long cloak stood before him.—He

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would have demanded his business, but guilt and appprehension choaked his utterance.—At length the stranger threw off his disguise, and the youth *Selim*, the destined husband of the ill-fated Irene, stood before the astonished Prince.—" Behold, wretch! (cried the enraged youth,) the avenger of that hapless innocent, of whose untimely and miserable death you were the sole cause. That lovely victim of your brutal design lived only to reveal the villany of Alexis, and then expired in her father's arms. Kind Fortune brought me the intelligence of your arrival here, and vengeance has nerved my arm to inflict the punishment you so richly merit!" — So saying, he thrust his hand into his bosom for the concealed weapon of revenge; but the Prince recovering from his momentary surprise, hastily snatched up his sword, which lay naked on the couch, and ere the enraged Selim could grasp the dagger and disengage it from

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his dress, wherein it was unfortunately entangled, Alexis pierced his arm through with his sword, and lodged it in his heart! — The wretched youth sunk on the ground and expired without a groan!—Alexis immediately left the tent, and flew to his friend Kurzam, whom he brought back with him to view the scene. — "Behold! (said he, with seeming emotion,) behold the malice and dark revenge of the King!— Being well assured of my innocence, yet still thirsting after my life,—see, prostrate before you, the assassin whom he has sent to destroy me; but he has met with his just reward!" — Kurzam was struck with horror, and proposed instantly to make known to the whole army the injustice of the King, and to that end was desirous to search the body; but Alexis prevented him, by pretending to have too much veneration and respect for Maximin than to embitter the few last moments of his life, by exciting the disaffection of the

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troops, and therefore determined upon burying the body, and contenting himself with being able to produce his friend as a witness hereafter, if needful, of the apparent treachery and implacable malice of his father-in-law. — Without waiting a reply, he bore off the body; when at a distance, and unobserved, he mangled it so as to preclude the possibility of its being recognized; and then buried it in a secret spot. — He afterwards returned to his tent, where he passed the remainder of the night in company with his friend.—Their discourse was—the hatred of the King, and the perils which the Prince had undergone; but, as a faithful relation of events would not answer the purpose of Alexis, he revealed only such parts as might tend to hold up the supposed rancor of Maximin to hatred and contempt, and to excite sympathy and wonder in the bosom of Kurzam. Morning at length arrived, and it was agreed that the

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Prince should present himself early before the King, without taking notice of the late event; but this was the suggestion of the Prince, for very obvious reasons, yet his friend could scarcely be persuaded from communicating publicly to the troops the danger from which their favourite leader had just escaped.—At his intercession, however, it was at length settled, that, unless Maximin repented of his design, banished his enmity, and admitted Alexis to his favour and former honours, that, from a regard for his own preservation, he should make known the danger he was exposed to, and trust to the good will of the army for the result. — It was the middle of the day before the physicians permitted the entrance of any person to the presence of the King; whose appearance, though now affording hopes of an ultimate recovery, was so weak as to render his being kept quiet absolutely indispensible. This was unwel-

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come news to the Prince, whose safety now, more than ever, rested on his death. At length he was allowed to enter the royal tent, upon his solemnly declaring that he had business of the utmost importance, and which could not be any longer deferred.—Maximin was in a peaceful slumber when Alexis entered:—he approached the reclining Monarch,—who seemed to breathe more freely than when the Prince had seen him before:—a faint smile was visible on his sallow cheek.—Alexis surveyed with astonishment the shrunken form of this once invincible Monarch:—his gigantic limbs were now mere skeletons of those which had so often dealt destruction among the dismayed ranks of the enemy, and caused the admiration of contending armies. Useless hung the enormous sword and ponderous shield, which those arms alone could use, but the weight of which they never more appeared likely to be able to bear.—Over these, the

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glaring helmet shone, whose towering height, oft seen amidst the battle's rage above the common warriors of the field, served as a guide to lead his followers through slaughtered ranks to victory and renown; while the high-waving plume, which nodded over it, appeared to droop now in apt allusion to the decaying strength of its majestic owner.—The Prince's mind received a mournful impression as he contemplated these objects; but his eyes were at last attracted by the glittering crown, which was suspended over the monarch's head.—At one glance his ambitious hopes revived, and all impressions of sympathy, duty, or affection, vanished, while ambition alone actuated his soul.—"Behold! (said he mentally,) the object of my unceasing desire!—Already is Maximin on the brink of the grave;—but he *may* recover, and then my dream of power will vanish, as he is in possession of the knowledge of a crime, which must for

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ever annihilate my hopes!—Why not therefore hasten the moment of his dissolution, and at once secure my own safety and the attainment of the Sceptre of Hira!"—He paused—then instantly resolved; and seizing one of the cushions of the couch, pressed it with all his force upon the head of the ill-fated slumbering King!—A short and ineffectual struggle was all that the enfeebled Maximin could oppose to the nervous strength of the murderous ruffian, and in a few moments he ceased to breathe!—Alexis surveyed the body, and, convinced of the spark of life being extinct, he affected a look of horror and despair, and with a voice as if choaked with grief, he called in the attendants.—"Summon the King's physicians! (cried he impatiently;) I fear he has just breathed his last in my arms!"—The physicians confirmed the death of their royal master.

The rumour spread through the

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camp, and grief and consternation prevailed.—Alexis sought his friend Kurzam, and with well-feigned sorrow bewailed the melancholy occurrence. "Although he has unhappily been my persecutor, (said he,) I cannot but lament his death; more especially as it has deprived me of the opportunity of convincing him and the world of my integrity, honour, and loyalty; and I am still additionally unfortunate that no person was at hand to witness his last words before he closed his lips for ever; for, he seemed to wish to impress upon me that he no longer believed the accusations of my enemies, and solemnly bequeathed me the Crown as his lawful successor.—But (continued the Prince) as no witness attended, and the fact rests on my single assertion, I would wish it to be by the free choice of the people that I should assume the crown, rather than take possession of it through the private communication of their depar-

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ted Monarch." — "The unanimous suffrages of the people (replied Kurzam) there can be no doubt of obtaining; and at a proper season I will make known to the army the dying commands of Maximin, and announce you as his successor!"—On the day after the funeral, Alexis was unanimously chosen by the army as their future sovereign; and with dissembled modesty, but a heart transported with pride and exultation, he took possession of the crown of his murdered predecessor!—He then gave orders for the camp to be broken up, and in a few days after he made his public entry into the City of Hira.—He was conducted to the Palace amidst the acclamations of the giddy multitude, and the infamous Alexis at length mounted the Throne, which he had obtained through murder, falsehood, and ingratitude! — Public rejoicings succeeded the lamentations for the death of the late King, and all seemed hap-

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piness and pleasure. — Alexis alone could not enter fully into the general joy: the Princess (now his Queen) occupied his thoughts.—To preserve the good opinion of the people, it was necessary that he should restore her to liberty and the possession of his bed and throne; but to this measure an obstacle presented itself;—Zara, if still alive, would claim his affections and a share of his power and prosperity, who had relinquished every noble enjoyment and even sacrificed her peace of mind for ever to follow his fortunes. —He however determined to visit Orsinda, and was received by that innocent and affectionate lady with a transport, which even made a lively impression upon the callous heart of the blood-stained Alexis.—In the height of his joy he caused her to be proclaimed his queen, and they returned in all the pomp and splendour of majesty to the capital.—But, though gratified with the assurances of the most

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tender unaltered attachment in the heart of the lovely Orsinda, still the mind of Alexis could not remain long at ease:—his thoughts reverted to the hidden cause of Maximin's persecution, and he applied himself to trace the source of that monarch's suspicion.—As a means towards this discovery, he directed his attention to notice, who, among all the courtiers who were constantly about the person of the late King, now absented themselves; and soon remarked that the chief physician, the father of Mariana, was among those who had disappeared. — Conviction flashed across his mind:—"'Tis plain, (cried he,) 'tis evident, who was my secret enemy;—the death of his daughter—the disappointed conspiracy of his sons—these circumstances urged him to effect my ruin; — but revenge is now in my power!" — The next day, the physician was arrested and thrown into prison, and not long afterwards an officer

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came, whe told him that it had been proved that he had trifled with the malady of his late Sovereign, if not accelerated his death, and that he was accordingly condemned to die. In vain did the wretched man assert his innocence, he was privately executed a few hours after.—Meantime, the intelligence of Maximin's death, and the accession of Alexis reached the Valley of Islam. The health of Zara was restored, and she set forwards to join the new monarch, and claim his solemn promise. When she arrived at the Palace, she sent a message to the King to say a stranger wished an audience. — Alexis was at that moment enjoying the endearing conversation of his Queen. — He was vexed at being interrupted, and commanded that the stranger should apply some other opportunity. — Zara gave a ring to the eunuch, "Tell the King, (said she,) that the owner of that ring expects an immediate audience!"—Alexis started

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at the sight of the ring! it was the one which he had given to Zara on the day he had quitted the Valley! — He ordered the stranger to be conducted into a private chamber. Zara flew into his arms, he received her with a shew of delight; but, from the sudden shock her unexpected visit had occasioned, and from the numerous unpleasant recollections which her presence inspired, compared with the tranquil delights he was at that moment enjoying with his virtuous and affectionate queen, (in spite of all his attempts to disguise his chagrin,) the penetrating eyes of Zara quickly discovered his confusion. — "I know (said she) that my presence must be irksome to you, while my more happy sister engrosses your thoughts. I will not destroy your happiness, which it is my sole object to promote, by augmenting your embarrassment; suffer me to live in the Palace, unseen and unknown, and receive only, as the re-

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ward of my love, some portion of your regard when my sister may not engage your attention." — Alexis was pleased with this unexpected forbearance, and promised to comply with every thing which she proposed; she therefore retired to the apartments allotted for her residence.

Zara, having succeeded thus far in her project, studied, by every artful blandishment and demonstration of fondness, to supplant her sister in the affections of Alexis, while he revelled undisturbed in the enjoyment of his unruly passions.—One day, returning from the chase, he passed the house of Ali Asher, and the unwelcome thoughts which then rose in his mind troubled him greatly. — "This man, (said he, mentally,) is aware of my behaviour towards his lovely daughter, and has heard from her dying lips the name of him who was accessary to her unhappy fate — he must be silenced!" — Guilt is ever its own tor-

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mentor—an officer was sent to inquire for Ali Asher, but he learned that Ali had sold his house and had departed with his brother Noureddin into the Persian dominions. — Alexis was disappointed in his purpose;—he anticipated the effects of the tale of horror which the disconsolate father would have to impart wherever he should go, and the universal execration and abhorrence which would thereby be excited against the author of his misfortunes. — But these gloomy reflections were soon obliterated by the smiles and endearments of his virtuous queen, and the gratifying caresses of the lascivious Zara. The constant behaviour of the latter was calculated to make more impression on the corrupt heart and gross disposition of Alexis than the mild virtues of the innocent Orsinda; and in a little time his affection towards the queen became much abated, while the caresses of Zara almost wholly engrossed his attention. The Queen lamented his neglect in si-

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lence, and endured his manifest indifference without complaint; for, as yet, she was ignorant who was the cause of his inconstancy. — It was not long, however, before one of her eunuchs communicated to her the fatal secret, who had learnt the name and quality of the King's favourite through an intercourse with one of the attendants of Zara.—The meek spirit of the queen could no longer bear up under such a discovery; still, however, she ventured not to complain, but grew pensive and melancholy.—The King observed the alteration, and inquired the cause.—With some difficulty he drew from her a reluctant confession. Alexis without hesitation acknowledged his attachment to her sister,—which he professed his desire to have still concealed; but, since she had made the discovery, he declared that the only means she could adopt to retain any portion of his affection, was to receive the Princess upon an equal footing and share

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his love between them. It was in vain that the Queen reasoned against such a connection, nor could she obtain from her Lord any information as to the circumstances which had introduced her sister into the Palace, or what was become of her husband, the Prince Conradin :—the King in an imperious tone commanded her to cease her inquiries, and prepare to receive her sister as the future partner with her in his affections. That same hour, the unhappy Queen was constrained to embrace the Princess, and admit her as an inseparable companion. — Soon however, Zara discovered the evident aversion which Orsinda had conceived against her ; nor could she contemplate without the most poignant envy the placid virtues of the suffering Queen. — Alexis too, she observed, had moments of returning fondness for his virtuous wife, and she could no longer endure the united pangs of envy, love, and jealousy. — When

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once the heart becomes polluted with vice, to stop it in its abandoned course becomes too often a fruitless undertaking!—Zara was too far advanced in guilt to start at the commission of any crime, the commitment of which seemed likely to remove any obstacles which obtruded in the way of her desires. Her sister's death seemed the only means of ensuring her the undisputed possession of the King's love. A short fit of compunction delayed the execution of her plan for a few days; but the injudicious disclosure of a circumstance from Orsinda's lips at once decided her own fate:—she imprudently imparted her belief to Zara that she was pregnant. The perfidious woman quickly conceived the probable advantages which such a circumstance would afford the Queen over her lord's affection, and from that moment she doomed her sister to destruction.—She worried her imagination for a plan to complete her

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horrid purpose, for she feared openly to attempt it, and at last she fixed upon a scheme to accomplish her object, and at the same time escape all suspicion. It was usual for the two sisters to sit at the same table with the King. — Zara had always conducted herself with a shew of regard and respect towards her sister, and she now appeared more particularly attentive to her. She managed to introduce a knife at table, which she had contrived to anoint with a deadly poison only on one side of the blade, and at the commencement of the repast she divided a bird, which had been served up as a great dainty, with the baneful instrument; the infected part she gave the unsuspecting Queen, and partook of the remainder herself. Orsinda remarked the unpalatable flavour, which Zara attributed to the quality of the bird, and appeared to partake of it with peculiar satisfaction. On a sudden, however, she affected

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to be seized with indisposition ; and, having taken the precaution to swallow some harmless soporiferous drug, the better to do away suspicion, and cause a primary alarm on her own account, she threw herself into all the postures of a person writhing under the most excruciating torture, distorting her countenance, rolling her eyes, and straining the blood into her features, while she uttered the most dismal groans, The King was greatly alarmed, and rose to support her to her apartment, when he was interrupted by the sudden shrieks of the Queen, who became instantly convulsed, and fell from her seat. The artful Zara, as if forgetful of her own pangs, conjured the King to go to the asssistance of her sister; and, having with the greatest dexterity again secured the fatal knife, she suffered herself to be borne away by her attendants ! — In the meantime, the tortures of the unhappy Queen became too dreadful

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to describe, and even the unfeeling bosom of Alexis was torn with anguish as he witnessed the pangs she endured. — The subtle poison diffused itself quick as lightening through her veins, and she continued franticly raving and tearing herself during the agonizing torments which she suffered; till at length, after a few hours endurance of the most excruciating pains which human nature could undergo, she breathed her last in the presence of Alexis, who appeared overwhelmed with affliction. He then inquired after the Princess, and was informed, that, having appeared to suffer nearly in an equal degree with the deceased Queen, she had at last fallen into a deep sleep, but which had been greatly disturbed at first by frequent starts and contortions of countenance, accompanied by muttering sounds and incoherent sentences. — This account from the physician was truly correct; for, the conscience of

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that wicked woman had smitten her very forcibly upon witnessing the dreadful situation to which she had reduced her innocent sister; and the sleeping-potion operating upon her at the moment when her guilty heart was torn with remorse, her sleep had produced the most horrid dreams, which occasioned her to seem so disturbed and convulsed: but this appearance only tended to confirm the misconception of the King and the Physicians that she had suffered from the same unhappy cause as the Queen. — After some hours had elapsed, her slumbers became more composed, and the King immediately commenced a diligent scrutiny to discover the author of this dreadful tragedy. He recollected the two sisters having eaten of the same dish, and, on examining the fragments, a tainted portion of the bird was discovered. The cooks were immediately seized, their assistants examined, and even the mutes, who at-

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tended at the table, fell under suspicion. It was of no avail that they all protested their innocence, the guilt was too apparent; and, as it was impossible that any confession could be extorted as to who had been the perpetrators of the deed, they were all alike devoted to the same punishment, but the execution was delayed till the fate of the Princess should be known. When Zara revived, the first moments of returning recollection were truly horrid; but ambition soon acquired the ascendancy over conscience; although, when she inquired into the fate of her sister, her whole frame became greatly agitated, which was attributed alone to sympathy and extreme sensibility.—The King described to her the shocking termination of Orsinda's existence, the discovery of the poisonous cause, and the means they had ineffectually employed to trace the contrivers of the horrid deed.—Zara affected, however, to gather some consolation at the

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fortunate escape of Alexis from the sufferings which she and the Queen had endured; and protested, in the most fervent manner, how contentedly she would have died, had but her dear sister been spared; at the same time imprecating curses on the promoters of her miserable death. — On the following day, the remaining poor innocent victims of this wretched woman's schemes, including cooks, servants, and mutes, to the amount of thirty persons, were all impaled alive! But the plots and contrivances of human wisdom are naturally subject to impediments and subversion, and the devices of the wicked, through the secret but powerful interference of an all-wise and over-ruling Providence, most frequently terminate in detection and disappointment. Zara had only calculated on the supposed uninterrupted pleasures she should enjoy, if her sister were removed for ever from partaking of the divided affections

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the King; and for this purpose, she had additionally loaded her soul with the crime of a sister's murder; but the pleasure she so ardently sought to obtain (like the treacherous vapour which blazes forth only to puzzle and mislead) still fled from her grasp and mocked her pursuit. Alexis had been already gratified to excess with her caresses, and variety was his sole delight; nor was his mind wholly free from a suspicion (occasioned by some unguarded expressions she had used in her frequent upbraidings for his inconstancy and neglect) of the real contriver of his Queen's death, the memory of whose endearing affections and mild virtues even the callous heart of Alexis could forcibly cherish.—He forbore, however, to notice his suspicions, as he did not scruple to render the wicked inclinations of this abandoned woman subservient to his most infamous designs.—Alexis, now that he had become possessed of Sove-

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reign power and authority, had given way to every ebullition of his turbulent and haughty disposition, and had become a bloody and remorseless tyrant. Cruelty and caprice perverted the ends of justice and equity, and malice and revenge biassed his judgements; while pride and oppression wholly filled his mind and governed his conduct universally. — The independent spirit of the nobles was alarmed, and the murmurs of the people grew loud and frequent. The army, also, which it had been the constant care of the late Monarch to keep perpetually in motion, had, by being suffered to remain long in a state of inactivity, become insolent and riotous; and the partiality, which the soldiers had once felt for Alexis, and which favourable prepossession had been the means of insuring him the Crown which he enjoyed, had greatly subsided, from the disappointment they experienced by the total al-

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teration in his habits of life, and their discontent began to shew itself very conspicuously. To curb this spirit of disobedience among the soldiery, severity was resorted to, which only served to augment their disaffection, and at length excited such a universal tendency to mutiny as to cause the greatest apprehension and alarm. — Meanwhile, the secret but sure designs of Heaven were silently accelerating the dreadful hour of retribution.— The progress of ungovernable passions and daring villany had been suffered (by an all-wise Providence) thus far to prosper, that the folly and disappointment of vice might appear the more manifest, and prove to the deluded votaries of guilt and immorality the impossibility of their ever embracing that phantom which they so falsely denominate happiness, and which they have endeavoured to obtain by the commitment of every species of crime and wickedness. — A few hours after

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the murder of the Prince Conradin, and the flight of Alexis and Zara from the Persian Province, the Prince of Xavia, the brother of that ill-fated nobleman arrived, and found the slaves weeping over the body of their murdered Lord: — their sorrows were great and sincere, for they wept the loss of a master, kind, generous, and humane. They could render little account of the manner of his death, as their fellow-slave, the only witness of the deed, had been found dead on his master's body; nor had the shocking scene been discovered till some time after the flight of their mistress, with whose route no one was acquainted. The Prince of Xavia was transported with rage at the horrid sight, yet the uncertainty of which road the fugitives had taken caused him to pause a moment to consider of the means of effecting a severe vengeance. In examining the late apartment of Alexis, some papers

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were found in his garment which drew the Prince's attention: they were the private instructions which had been delivered to Alexis by Maximin, for the guide of his conduct during his embassy at the Court of Persia, together with memorandums of his own discoveries, and critical remarks upon the strength and disposition of the Persian forces, with other important information; and which, in consequence of his sudden recal, and his subsequent seizure and imprisonment without being heard in his defence, through the blind fury of the King, he had never given up, but had retained them about his person during his confinement, as well as in his flight from prison; but in his hurry and confusion after the bloody tragedy in the garden of his friend and benefactor, he had totally forgotten them, and they now fell into the hands of his most bitter and implacable enemy. — It will be remembered that Maximin

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had told Alexis, at the interview between them the day before the King's death, that the Prince of Xavia had made known to him the cause of Conradin's murder, and that he meditated full revenge on him for the deed;—the discovery of the papers, however, had been withheld in this communication to Maximin, for the Prince deemed it proper to lay them before his own Sovereign. The Great King was much surprized at the intelligence of the ambitious designs of the King of Hira, which were corroborated by the evidence of these instructions, and he resolved to take immediate measures to frustrate the completion of the scheme; but, unhappily, at that time the whole of his military force was occupied in a defensive war with the infatuated soldiers of Mahomet, who had made very serious encroachments upon the Persian territories.—Affairs remained in this state, when Maximin received the accidental

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wound from the poisoned arrow, which occasioned his grand scheme to be delayed, and his hardy troops to lie inactive in their camp.—Upon the death of that unfortunate Monarch, and some little time after Alexis had mounted the throne, it was necessary that the new Sovereign should send the accustomed Embassy to the Court of Persia; and it was about the period to which this History has been brought down, that a splendid embassy was dispatched by Alexis, now King of Hira, to the Persian Capital.—The Prince of Xavia, who was then at the Imperial Court, insinuated himself by his attentions into the confidence of some of the Lords of the Embassy, from whom he learned an account of the tyranny of the new Monarch and the increasing discontent of his subjects. He acquainted the Great King with this intelligence; and, by reminding him of the distinguished part which Alexis had borne in the late

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daring schemes of Maximin, which were directed against his own Throne and Life, and that the same might still, at some future period, be put in execution by the present blood-stained Tyrant of Hira,—he obtained a commission from his Sovereign to take advantage of the disaffection of the subjects of Alexis, and if possible to hurl him from the Throne, which should be given to the Prince as a compensation for his services, and to satisfy his revenge for the murder of his Brother. For this purpose, he soon succeeded in bringing over the Nobles of the Embassy to enter into his views, they all having, more or less, some real cause of complaint against their tyrant master.—To favour the plot, and at the same time cover the daring project, they were loaded with valuable presents, and thus returned to the Court of Hira, with the Prince of Xavia disguised in their train. —— Meanwhile, Alexis revelled unrestrain-

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ed in every luxurious desire; nor did the females belonging even to the families of his chiefest nobles and courtiers escape his power, aided by the artful designs of the abandoned Zara; who scrupled not to stoop to the vile office of alluring these victims to their destruction to gratify the wishes of her Lord; thus rendering herself necessary to the very existence of his pleasures, she preserved an undisputed power over him, and, while she shared his caresses, at the same time governed all his actions.—Upon the return of the Embassy, the secret work of vengeance was commenced; and a fresh act of atrocity, committed by the King upon a part of the family of one of the Nobles, while absent at the Court of Persia, served to accelerate the dreadful retribution which awaited him.——On a certain night, the slumbers of Alexis were greatly disturbed by a most frightful dream:— He fancied himself in the Hall of Audience

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of the late murdered Monarch, to which he had been summoned.—Maximin was seated on his throne, arrayed in all the pomp of majesty, and surrounded by his faithful guards:—on his right hand and on his left were placed, a little below him, two other thrones, which were vacant, and some females arrayed in the most costly and glittering apparel were arranged on either side.—On his entrance into the hall, a solemn silence reigned, and the King dispatched a herald to bring Alexis before him, and made him seat himself on the left hand throne, while martial music resounded through the vaulted doom.—On a sudden it ceased, and then the softest and most melodious strains were heard.—In a few minutes, the throng of guards divided, and the Princess Orsinda, attended by two females enveloped in long black veils, moved slowly towards the King, who rose to receive her, and placed her on the throne on his right hand.

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The sweet sounds of the music now died away; and the King, turning to Alexis, motioned that he should take the hand of the Princess.—He rose to comply, but at his approach she lifted up her veil, and he beheld—not the once-beautiful countenance of his wife, but a display of the same dreadful appearance which she exhibited while the pangs of death were on her from the effects of the poison.—As his blood recoiled at the sight, the figure, rising from her seat, fixed her eyes starting from their bleeding sockets upon him, and pointed to one of the females who had entered the hall with her;—his eyes followed the direction, and, as he tremblingly regarded the figure, the veil dropped, and he beheld the distorted, convulsed, and agonized, features of the forsaken Marianna.—He turned with horror from this object, and again looked upon upon the Princess, who seemed occupied in supporting the second female who had

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been her companion, and was resting her head in her arms; as he stood speechless, expecting some new discovery of horror, the Princess withdrew the veil, and he beheld the bleeding, mashed, and mutilated features of the amiable but ill-fated Irene!—Overcome with terror and dismay, he shrunk from this display of accumulated horrors, and was about to fly from the scene, when, casting his eyes upon the King, he fancied he observed the countenance change and assume the livid hue of death, while in a tremulous and sepulchral tone he upbraided him with his base treachery in attempting his murder:—then suddenly resuming his natural voice, he commanded the guards to secure him, and bear him away to his punishment!—At that instant, two Officers advanced, and, as they drew near, his guilty heart shuddered.—Each seized an arm, and at the same time throwing open their vestments, displayed the mangled bo-

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dies of Selim and the Prince Conradin. Immediately, the King, the Princess, and their train, vanished,—the surrounding guards were converted into forms and appearances of the most disgusting and terrific kind,—the music was changed to dismal yells and horrid groans,—and he was finally tossed from place to place, till the torments and agony of his distempered mind roused him from sleep!——The impression of his dream prevented his taking farther repose, and he paced the apartment with disordered steps. A noise, like the murmer of distant voices, broke on his ear.—The temper of mind he was in subjugated him to alarm.—He listened—the noise increased.—He looked out from the window into the palace-garden, but the darkness prevented his discovering any object.—He opened the chamber-door—all was silent!—He called the guard, but received no answer.—He walked to the end of the gallery and searched

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the anti-rooms, but the eunuchs were not at their posts.—He seized the lamp which hung from the pillar, and descended to the Hall of Audience,—all was desolate, and the doors unbarred. He was about to return to his chamber to arm himself and explore this mystery, when he suddenly heard voices in the inner court; and, looking from the balcony, beheld a body of armed men with torches cautiously ascending the steps of the Palace.—A conviction of treachery burst upon his mind, and he flew to his chamber, seized his arms, and in an obsure part of the gallery, where he could with facility retreat to the garden, he silently waited their approach.—He observed them direct their steps towards the Royal apartments, and, being now convinced of their hostile intentions, he quitted his hiding-place, and precipitately descended to the garden.—Here he alarmed the guards posted in the distant turrets; and, briefly acquainted the

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captains with the apparent treachery, with revengeful haste he led them back to the lower Court of the Palace, where he purposed to lay wait for the conspirators, whom he judged would quickly retire when they should find themselves disappointed of their prey. As he conjectured, the Prince of Xavia, who headed the daring band, and who, by corrupting the Royal eunuchs to betray their master, had hoped to accomplish his purpose by one decisive blow, when he discovered that Alexis had left his chamber where the eunuchs had solemnly protested they had a little time before left him asleep, perceived some untoward circumstance had occurred to give him alarm, and that he was no doubt preparing to defeat their design;—he therefore advised that they should retreat as silently as they entered, and summon to their aid their friends whom they had left in greater numbers without the walls.—Alexis and his party now ob-

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served them winding down the spiral stairs into the Hall, and his impatient spirit would not allow time for them all to descend before he gave the sign, and they rushed from their concealment, making a dreadful slaughter.—Luckily for the Prince of Xavia and a few of his principal friends, they were among the hindmost on the stairs, and effected their escape by another passage into the court-yard, and thence rejoined their party in safety, while those left behind fell a prey to the revengeful fury of the King.—All farther disguise now became useless; and the Prince of Xavia addressed the conspirators, declaring no time was to be lost, if they expected to preserve their lives, or secure their future peace, for the Tyrant was now rouzed, and nothing was to be apprehended from his vengeance but slavery or death.—They unanimously avowed their readiness to hurl from the throne such an infamous and abandoned Monarch;

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and, without a moment's delay, they marched in firm order and with determined hearts to the attack.—Meantime, Alexis and his party, having slain all who had fallen into their hands, re-closed the gates, and stationed the guards in the fore-court; while with a chosen troop the King hastened to the eastern extremity of the Palace to collect together the soldiers who occupied the ramparts there, and to dispatch a courier to the camp, that the army might arrive to his assistance by break of day.—Fortunately for the conspirators, this courier was intercepted, and revealed the purport of his message.—Now it happened that a review had been appointed the following day upon a spacious plain half a day's journey from the city; and the conspirators were well aware, that if they could prevent any intelligence of the King's danger reaching the camp for a few hours longer, the troops would have begun their march.—Every

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thing occurred to assist their design; but, fearing some fatal impediment might arise if their object was not accomplished before day-light, they again resolutely approached the palace-walls, with some difficulty burst open the gates, and bore down all before them.—Meantime, Alexis had dispatched a eunuch to apprise Zara of this unexpected assault, and to conduct her to a place of safety.—The Princess was petrified with astonishment; but, instead of flying from the danger, insisted upon being conducted to the King.—She found Alexis anxiously waiting the arrival of the army; but, notwithstanding all his remonstrances, she peremptorily refused to quit his side, or retire from the tumult.—The impatience of the King increased, another courier was dispatched to the camp, and at this moment it was that the gates were forced and the guards fled in dismay.—Alexis sent forward the greatest por-

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tion of his men to check the progress of the enemy, while he prepared himself to follow with the remainder.—Being ignorant of the force and number of the assailants, he was constrained to act with great caution, and not to hazard the engagement of all his forces at once, but to retain a sufficiency to secure a retreat if necessary.—Zara still refused to retire, but employed herself in endeavouring to excite the ardor of the troops by her promises of high rewards for their constancy and fortitude.—The shouts of the soldiers, mingled with the clash of arms, now resounded through the Palace, and the dismal glare of the torches contributed to render the scene more terrific.—Some wounded soldiers brought intelligence that the enemy had entered the outer hall in great numbers, and that the guards were giving way on all sides.—Alexis ordered a reinforcement to repair to the scene of action, and once more urged the Princess to retire

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to a remote part of the Palace, whither himself would conduct her; and to this she at last consented, while he cheered her with the assurance that the army would quickly arrive, quell this daring insult, and afford him ample vengeance.—After placing her in a distant part of the building, and having left a few soldiers for her guard, he was returning in haste to his party, when, in crossing a passage which communicated with the Royal Chambers, a band of the enemy's soldiers rushed upon him.—Alexis was attended only by three men, having left the rest with the Princess, and one of these was killed at the first onset.—The King revenged the deed by laying two of the assailants dead at his feet; but in striking at a third, his sword broke in his hand, and he would have been immediately slain by a blow of a battle-axe, which was already aimed at his head, had not another of his faithful followers threw himself in the

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way and received the deadly wound. One soldier only now remained with the King; and, though they had dealt destruction among their enemies, and still continued to defend themselves with undiminished valor, they were so vigorously pressed that all hopes of victory appeared futile.—The King and his brave and faithful companion, wounded and faint with exertion, retreated, fighting desperately, till they found themselves in an apartment belonging to some of the women of the Palace, who had fled at the commencement of the uproar, and had left the door open; despairing of hope from farther resistance against a host, Alexis was on the point of discovering himself, and yielding to the enemy, when, casting his eyes round the room into which they had been driven, he recollected it to have been the scene of one of his most successful acts of villany upon a noble female, whom the vile arts of the Princess had inveigled into

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his power, and that there was a secret moving pannel in the wall, through which he had entered to effect his infamous design.—This discovery inspired him with fresh vigour;—he directed the retreat of himself and companion towards this part of the chamber, and, just as his faithful guard fell dead at his feet, covered with wounds, he touched the secret spring, and disappeared in a moment!—The passage he was now in led to a distant unconnected suite of rooms, and in a little time, breathless and faint, he re-joined his astonished troops.—His first inquiry was if the courier had returned from the camp; and, being answered in the negative, his mind misgave him, and he began to fear that the treachery was deeper laid than he had at first imagined.—The danger now increased; groans and shouts filled the Palace; lights appeared in several of the upper apartments, and the flying guards were seen leaping from the

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windows, or being hurled headlong by their infuriated enemies.—In this extremity, Alexis perceived nothing remained but to fly.—Morning was still at a distance,—nor could he ascertain the extent of the threatening evil:—he therefore prepared for flight; and, collecting together all that remained in the gardens or round the walls, he extinguished the torches, and silently retreated to the garden-gates, which, opening on the terrace, led down to the shores of the Caspian-sea, and where the Royal pleasure-vessels usually lay:—this spot he reached in safety, embarked on board one of them, and immediately set sail.

Meanwhile, the conspirators penetrated into the interior of the Palace without farther opposition; and, enraged to find their Royal prey had escaped, some of them in their fury fired the apartments.—Their leaders endeavoured to restain their rage, but in vain:—they continued to wreak

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their vengeance on all they found, nor did the unhappy females or defenceless eunuchs escape the dreadful destruction; as they considered all the inmates of the Tyrant's Palace as participators in the crimes of their atrocious master. — The fire soon acquired a height beyond the power of the incendiaries to quell, and quickly the whole pile seemed doomed to destruction. — The devouring flames penetrated at length to the quarter to which Zara had retired; and, ere she was apprised of her danger, it became impossible to escape.—The smoke and heat becoming excessive, the soldiers who had been left with her for her protection had rushed to the extremity of the gallery to explore a passage to facilitate the escape of their mistress; but, just as they had approached the head of the stairs, the gallery through which they had passed, being undermined by the fire, suddenly gave way and intercepted their return; and, when

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the cloud of sparks and smoke had subsided, they beheld the Princess at the door of the room, fainting in the arms of her attendants, who were themselves wringing their hands in all the agonies of despair.—They regarded them for a few moments with the keenest sensations of horror, and then were obliged to seek their own safety in a precipitate flight.—The devouring flames now approached the unfortunate groupe, who continued to support their sinking mistress, till the imperious calls of self-preservation compelled them to seek their own immediate relief: reluctantly, they left her by degrees, while still fainting on the floor, and jumping from the windows committed themselves to the mercy of the soldiers, who received them as they fell.—At length Zara revived, and found herself alone, save only one female, who had already expired at her feet with affright.—The flames were now actually bursting into

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the apartment:—it seemed a dreadful gulph opening to receive her as an awful punishment for all her past deeds. Madness seized her brain—she arose, and with the impetuosity of lightning precipitated herself through the window; but a part of the ornament of the frame caught her dress, and she hung suspended from the burning wall, uttering the most piercing screams! — The soldiers soon recognized by her robes that it was the Princess Zara; and, though justly exasperated against her by the multitude of her crimes, they could not view her present awful situation without shuddering with horror.—Though suspended in this dreadful state, she long remained alive; till, maddened with torture, she dashed her brains out against the pillars, and her scorched and mangled body fell at last lifeless to the ground!

During the occurrence of this truly heart-rending scene, and while

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his rich and lofty Palace was falling a prey to the devouring flames, Alexis with his small retinue was labouring to force their vessel through the waves; but the wind was contrary, and, causing a heavy swell, greatly retarded their progress.—The King cast his eyes towards the blazing Palace, and gave a sigh for the fate of the unhappy Princess, who his mind presaged would suffer in the general wreak.—His soul was tortured with the most dreadful apprehensions,—even his wonted presence of mind forsook him, and he was incapable of forming any positive mode of proceeding in this dangerous crisis.—While he was thus perplexed, day began to dawn, and still the vessel lingered within sight of the shore; and in a little time they observed a tumultuous crowd thronging to the sea-side, and three vessels immediately put off filled with soldiers.—He conjectured these could be no other than his enemies in pursuit of him, and he impatiently

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urged the sailors to exert themselves, promising them the greatest rewards for their efforts; but, notwithstanding all their endeavours, in a short time the vessels gained so much upon them that all hopes of escape were now laid aside; and Alexis, driven to despair, was determined to sell his life dearly, and either confound and subdue his foes by his intrepidity and personal valour, or die, contending for his crown and dignity! The enemy approached,—and the Prince of Xavia, who commanded the first vessel that came up, summoned him to yield, or expect the just vengeance of an insulted and oppressed People: he also demanded the restitution of the Crown at the instance of the King of Persia, from whom the late Monarch enjoyed his dignity, and who, dying without an heir, it became the undoubted prerogative of the Great King to appoint a successor.—Alexis made no reply to this summons; but, exhorting his

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soldiers to fight for their lawful Sovereign, he ordered his vessel to be steered direct against his adversary:—this was done; and he immediately jumped on board of the enemy, followed by his resolute and faithful crew, who fought with such determined valour, that they quickly mastered all who opposed them, and the Prince of Xavia himself was obliged at length to plunge into the sea, and seek his safety by swimming to the next vessel.—Alexis and his soldiers made a dreadful slaughter, and either killed or threw over-board the whole of the enemy's crew; then, dividing his own followers between the two ships, he gave the word to bear down upon the others.—A most obstinate conflict now ensued, which would certainly have terminated in favour of the King, had not, at that moment, two other vessels, also filled with soldiers, bore down upon them.—Still the King and his small band, now reduced and

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disabled by wounds and death, continued the fight with the most desperate valour; but, perceiving all attempts at victory would prove ineffectual, as even more ships were seen advancing, Alexis gave orders to sink his vessel, resolving to perish rather than fall into the hands of his enemies; but, at this critical moment, a flying spear struck his shoulder, and tore away his arm:—he sunk motionless on the deck, and his soldiers, thinking their leader dead, demanded quarter. The King was carried into the presence of the Prince of Xavia, and at that moment he revived.—"Behold, (said the Prince,) the end of all your infamous deeds!—Behold the vengeance suspended over your guilty head from the brother of him who you so basely murdered!—A terrible fate has already enveloped the adulterous wife of the too-confiding generous Conradin;—she has, by her miserable death, in some measure,

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atoned for the innumerable crimes she committed to contribute to your iniquitous pleasures; and now an awful retribution will be required of you!" To this address Alexis answered not a word.—And now the vessels approached the shore, and he was landed amidst the shouts and execrations of an enfuriated populace.—The executioner was commanded to cut *off both* his feet and his remaining hand, and he was then stripped naked, bound with strong cords, and fixed upon the back of a mule.—In this manner he was led through the City, amidst the scoffs of the multitude; during all which time, he never spoke, nor uttered a single groan, nor even once lift up his head.—At last—bleeding, faint with agony, and covered with sweat and dust, he was carried to a rising ground opposite the Palace, where two poles had been erected; to each of which a leg was fastened, and thus he remained suspended, his ene-

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mies intending he should in this state expire! — So exasperated were all classes of his subjects against him for the dreadful murders, rapes, and wanton cruelties, of which he had been guilty, that even the sight of his present mutilated and shocking condition could not restrain them from committing all kinds of indignity upon him, and filling his ears with the most mortifying taunts and reproaches :—to all of which, the poor suffering wretch answered nothing but these few melancholy words—"*Ah! why seek to bruize a broken reed!*"—At last, after enduring many hours of excruciating torture, two soldiers, who had fought under his command in many gallant battles, and who commiserated the unhappy fate of their once-adored and victorious leader, drew their swords and plunged them at once into his lacerated body!

Thus perished ALEXIS, the Tyrant of Hira, after a reign of Two Years!

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—and in his awful destiny we trace the just judgement of Heaven, who, for a life spent in the most vile and iniquitous manner, decreed a dreadful punishment should await his last hour; and that, as his sinful course had been constantly marked by cruelty, murder, lust, ambition, and love of arbitrary power; so his career should terminate from the combined impulse of treachery, hatred, malice, and revenge!

THE END.

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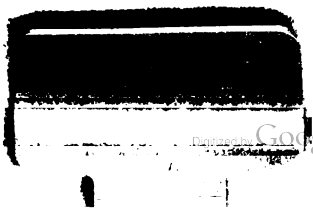
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